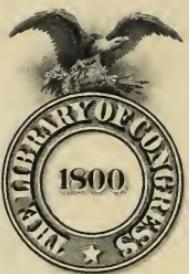


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LETTERS
TO THE
REV. JOHN MACLEAN,
CONTAINING
AN EXPOSITION
OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF WESLEYAN METHODISM,
WITH
PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF ITS EFFECTS.

ALSO

Remarks on publications by "An Old Methodist,"—"An Eye and Ear Witness," and on the conduct and "Reply" of Mr. Maclean.

harm
BY T. ALLIN.

11

SECOND EDITION. WITH AN APPENDIX,

Containing Animadversions on "An Exposure, &c., by another Member of the Methodist Old Connexion."

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4 5
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Am I therefore become your ENEMY, because I tell you the TRUTH?

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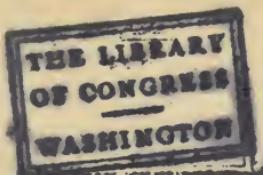
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following letters, occasioned by one of the foulest *personal* attacks, both from the pulpit and the press, that ever disgraced the history of religious controversy, are laid before the public generally, to enable them to understand not only the principles and form of the most despotic government, whether civil or religious, now existing in these kingdoms, excepting, perhaps, the papal hierarchy; but also the extraordinary means by which that government is sustained.

To the superficial observer, it may seem strange, that in the midst of increasing knowledge, and in connexion with the rapid advancement of liberal opinions and institutions, a system of such a character and magnitude should have risen up, the movements of which are retrograde to those of society in general, and are calculated to give to them a contrary direction: but it is yet more strange that such a system should be supported by thousands of those, who, in civil society are among the most ardent admirers of liberty, and would be the last to compromise its claims. The history of Methodism fully explains the first of these circumstances; while those who understand the hold which the preachers have on the minds both of members and a large class of hearers, not by means of religious considerations merely, but also in consequence of pecuniary responsibilities, and family and commercial relations, can easily account for the latter.

It seems of late to have been supposed, that though in civil society, liberal principles and forms of government are so connected with public rights and general happiness, as to render it virtuous to sacrifice ease, or personal liberty, or even life itself in their defence; yet in the christian church, government is one of those trifles, or "circumstantialis," which either cannot, or does not affect any important interest; and, therefore, may be based on any principles, and put on any form: a supposition in itself palpably absurd, and which the whole history of the church disproves. If the present state of Wesleyan Methodism, and the present conduct of its rulers, only assist in dispelling this delusion, and in shewing the latitudinarians of this class, that despotic principles and forms of government, even when connected with the most elevated

personal piety, and with institutions preeminently fitted for usefulness, become the natural source of innumerable evils, and therefore ought to be instantly and for ever banished from the church, a lesson of no trifling importance will have been learned, and a benefit of no common magnitude will have been conferred. Such lesson, too, must be learned, before the reign of righteousness can become universal.

With respect to the personalities contained in these letters, circumstances rendered them unavoidable. Still, as the author is much more anxious for the prevalence of right principles than for the maintenance of his own character, he has laboured to keep the former prominently in view, and to advert to the latter as seldom as possible. He has only to add, that he sees no cause to regret the severity of the remarks at the close of the fourth letter, on the conduct of Mr. Maclean; more especially, as he has since learned that the written document there adverted to was actually transcribed in the presence of the friend who took it; and therefore, that a deliberate crime has been committed, is rendered in the highest degree probable, if not absolutely certain. What defence will be set up, remains to be seen.

Sheffield, January 19th, 1835.

Since the publication of the first edition of the ensuing letters, a defence of Mr. Maclean has been attempted by an anonymous writer, which will be noticed in the Appendix.

T. ALLIN.

Sheffield, March 16th, 1835.

LETTER I.

TO THE

REV. JOHN MACLEAN,

Minister in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion.

REV. SIR,

It is with much reluctance and with feelings of deep regret that I thus publicly address you. Your conduct, however, has left me no alternative; and the only apology I owe is to the public, for delay in a work which duty to myself and them required should be expeditiously performed. Unwilling, however, to misrepresent or injure either you or your friends, I have taken much time and labour to verify statements and alleged facts, that I might preserve myself from the charge of negligence and error, and others from the evils produced by misrepresentation. Of my solicitude for correctness, I hope I may appeal to you as a witness, so far, at least, as relates to the allegations against yourself: having, after I had sought out, collected, and compared information, sent it to you, that you might admit, qualify, or deny, as you saw right. The same solicitude I have felt in every other case. If, therefore, I have erred, it has been unintentionally; and so soon as error is proved, it shall be acknowledged and renounced.

Since writing the above, I have had put into my hands a copy of my own address, published by you, without any consent of mine, and, therefore a literary piracy: — published, indeed, for the *pretended* purpose, that “the *entire* subject may be brought *fairly* before the public;” but in *reality* that you might gain a dishonourable advantage over one whom you are engaged in a fruitless attempt to degrade; and that you might for a short time lead the public astray, by prefixing to the letter as a fact, what you could scarcely but know was a falsehood, and by imputing as an only motive, what the letter itself proves was not even the principal one.

These charges, Sir, shall in due time be substantiated, to the satisfaction of every honest mind that will take the trouble to examine. Exceedingly do I regret the necessity under which you have laid me of speaking out thus plainly. I once thought you honourable, liberal, and candid: but your treatment of one of your brethren in the ministry, whose piety and talents entitled him at least to courtesy and kindness, especially from you — I mean the Rev. S. Dunn, — convinced me that I and others had mistaken your character, and that, either in your judgment or disposition there was more of the lordliness and narrowness of your order than I had previously suspected. The report of your doings in Norfolk-street and Brunswick Chapels, did not weaken this impression: still I was willing to hope that most, if not all, was the effect of temporary excitement: but even this forlorn hope is done away by your

piracy, prefaced, as I shall prove it is, by a statement at which its author *ought* to blush — by the imputation of a motive as the only one, the influence of which was obviously subordinate — and by an *avowal* of bigotry and littleness, which, though too characteristic of the party to which you belong, would be denounced as a reproach by any other respectable body of professing Christians in this country. But while I reserve these topics for my next letter, I cannot pass over the following note, given by you at the bottom of page 1 : — “The Rev. T. Allin having given notice of his intention to publish a letter founded upon hearsay reports of certain statements made by me in Norfolk-street Chapel, on Sunday, the 23d Ult. it is probable I may, hereafter, have to enter more largely into this subject.—J. M'L.” The evident intention of this note, is to represent the evidence on which my account of your pulpit exercises rests, as being so questionable or uncertain, as to require peculiar caution in those before whom it may be presented, and thus to create a previous prejudice against it. Now, Sir, will this representation add to your celebrity for manly independence, high honour, and unimpeachable integrity, except among such as are resolved not to see, when they are informed that these “hearsay reports” are collected from your own seat-holders and members; consequently from persons who have no particular inducement to serve me against you, except an honest conviction of the truth of what they relate: — that they are collected from persons of acknowledged intelligence and respectability, and some of them of unquestionable piety: — that these persons report, not what was told them by others, but that which they saw and heard themselves: — that the reports have been collected, not from one or two, but from several, and some of them from *many* independent sources: — that when thus collected, they were committed to writing, and sent to you by a friend, in order that you might say, if, in your judgment, there was any misrepresentation: * — that you were requested to furnish in writing, any correction you deemed necessary, in order to prevent the possibility of misrepresentation on the part of the friend who waited upon you: — that though you verbally offered some corrections, yet you declined writing; lest, as you said, you “should fill Mr. Allin's pamphlet.” Yet these are “hearsay reports” !! Sir, I had before heard of a jesuitical contrivance, by which words might be so put together as to be *separately* true, yet *collectively* have all the effect of a falsehood: how far you have resorted to such a contrivance, or proved yourself worthy of the indulgence shewn, each person may judge; for myself, after what I have heard and now see, I must be excused if I attach less weight, either to your proposed corrections or subsequent statements, than I was disposed to do when I commenced this letter.

The recital of all the circumstances which have led to this address, is unnecessary: to you they are sufficiently known; and others will obtain a competent knowledge of them as I proceed. As considerable dissatisfaction existed with respect to the Wesleyan polity, originating chiefly in the conduct adopted by certain parties whose influence is predominant in Conference, in reference to the union of the church and state,

* Because, as I stated to friends, I deemed it but honourable to give you such an opportunity.

and their treatment of the Revds. Dr. A. Clarke, Stephens, Forsyth, Dr. Warren and others — but dissatisfaction, which, to some extent, existed previously, and only took occasion from those cases more fully to manifest itself, it seems to have been deemed necessary to ward off the apparently increasing danger by some extraordinary proceeding. As, therefore, the Rev. R. Newton, whose name has of late been associated with every anti-liberal measure among you, was engaged to preach in Brunswick Chapel, on Tuesday evening, Nov. 25th, when all the officers, who could be prevailed upon to do so, were solemnly to pledge themselves to adhere to the Conference as at present constituted — in other words, to resist the introduction of lay-members, or even of lay-influence into that body; and as some of their minds might need preparation for the part they were expected to act, the previous Sabbath was fixed upon for this important purpose. The scheme, indeed, was not confined to Sheffield, as the following account from Liverpool will shew: "The Methodist preachers in the Liverpool south circuit, having, on the evening of Sunday last, 23d November, 1834, contrary to an express law of Methodism, made the pulpit the vehicle of abusive attacks on the principles and objects of the Methodist Association, the members of that body have no opportunity of reply except through the medium of the public papers. These attacks we consider calculated to injure our characters, both in the church and in the world, and if persisted in, may be of serious consequence both to ourselves and families. To the Methodist public we appeal. 'We speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say.'"^{*} How far the Rev. S. Jackson, from Liverpool, who had been with you the preceding week, assisted in your warlike preparations, I, of course, know not. Two classes of persons, however, seem to have been fixed upon as the objects of attack: the one, those of your own members who deem some reform necessary in the constitution and proceedings of your Conference: and the other, those from without, who have either conscientiously seceded from you, on account of what they deem your despotic principles and form of government; or have been expelled by the ruling party from your community, and have since laboured either to lessen the wrongs they have seen perpetrated among you, and under which some of them have painfully suffered, or to secure the more just appreciation, and the more extensive spread of religious liberty: liberty which they believe to be the birth-right of every man; and of which, they think, no section of the Christian Church can be deprived without ultimate danger to itself, and immediate injury to the character of Christianity. The latter of these parties, you, Sir, and your coadjutors have taken great pains to place in another position; and, in order to effect the double purpose of degrading them, and securing the adherence of your people to the present constituted order of things, you have represented them as actuated merely by the desire to augment the numbers of their own party: — a petty, paltry feeling which they as much despise as you, and the possession of which they unequivocally disclaim. I shall not attempt to ascertain whether this imputation arises from the belief, either that they are incapable of being actuated by higher motives, or that the subject does not admit of their influence; or whether, which I suspect to be the case, they are thus reproached

* See *Christian Advocate*, Dec. 1, 1834.

because you and your helpers have not taken time to pause, and inquire how far such motives may and do exist. On these subjects I shall say more hereafter. I may however state, that the low, and false, yet the only position which we have been represented as occupying, in the present deranged state of things, is that of *disturbers of the peace of your societies for the purpose of increasing our own*: and this has been done, because some persons cannot, and others will not see any other; while some doubtless feel that this is the only position which their strength and weapons are adapted to carry, or in which we can be attacked with any prospect of success. In that position, Sir, we are *not* found; and, therefore, in expending your strength, and exhausting your ammunition upon it, you are only beating the air, or perpetuating ignorance and prejudice. How far you will deem the latter desirable, or rejoice in it as an appropriate recompence, you will determine for yourself.

The morning service of the Sabbath which was to be desecrated by the scene hereafter to be described, was conducted by a circuit preacher from some distance, but who, either acting in concert with yourself, or moved simultaneously by an inferior degree of the same spirit, gratified some of his hearers and offended others, by his attempts to shew, that suspicions of wrong principles, or wrong doings, on the part of Conference or the preachers, are not entertained, except by "wolves and foxes;" — and that unless repented of, given up, and forgiven, they must ensure eternal condemnation. Now, Sir, I allow that ministers are entitled to respect, in proportion to personal holiness and public usefulness — that candour ought to be exercised when judging of their principles and conduct — that in doubtful cases, charity ought, in general, to give a verdict in their favour; — and that, therefore, there are circumstances, under which, even suspicion betrays an improper, or even a dangerous state of mind. But then the man must be absolutely blind who does not perceive, and utterly besotted who will not acknowledge, that there are circumstances under which suspicion becomes a virtue; and not to be influenced by it, would be a dereliction of public duty. And, Sir, either openly to teach, or covertly to insinuate, that any class of ministers, whether in their individual, or collective capacity, are so infallible in judgment, or so perfect in their principles and conduct, as to be incapable of wrong, and are therefore beyond the legitimate range of suspicion, is to bring into operation one of the causes of popery, and to put on one of its distinguishing characteristics. More especially, when the principles and acts of Conference and its agents are exciting the surprise and awakening the displeasure of men of unquestionable piety and wisdom in almost all branches of the Christian Church in these kingdoms, and are either disgusting, or driving from your communion, men of the like character among yourselves — to pronounce, at that time, the existence of suspicion to be a proof of impiety, and of an exposure to condemnation, must betray such inability to discriminate, as is dishonourable to the understanding of a professed christian minister; or that reckless disregard of truth which implicates his integrity. Such a representation, under *such* circumstances, has in it more of craft than of sound wisdom; and seems rather designed to support the endangered power of the suspected, than to preserve the suspecting from everlasting ruin. I can tell you, Sir, of a more effectual way by which to preserve yourselves from sus-

picion, your members from that ruin you seem to fear, and your churches from such frequent convulsions, than the application of the terms "wolves and foxes" to your people, and threatening them with perdition: — Let them enjoy their rights as intelligent beings, and as constituting the great body of the churches: where they cannot *individually* have a share in the management of affairs which are *theirs* quite as much as they are yours, let them have it *representatively*; and thus far, at least, subject their own affairs to their direct inspection. Give up your assumed divine right to legislate and govern alone: a right which neither in theory nor practice can be consistently maintained, even by yourselves. Throw open the doors of your district meetings and Conferences to the representatives of your people; and by giving them a direct voice and influence in those arrangements in which they are principally interested, convince them that you have no unholy ambition to gratify, or exclusive interest to serve. Tell them that they are free to scrutinize your plans and conduct to the utmost, and to exercise their undisputed right of private judgment on the whole. And you will thus gain to yourselves more honour, and confer a greater benefit on your people and the world, than by any attempts you either have made or may yet make to support a power which *must* ultimately fall, or to render me an object of public execration.

The discourse in the morning, however, was only the note of preparation for battle; or the voice of the herald, before the hero was brought upon the stage. That hero, Sir, was yourself, whose courage and prowess had been tried, and had been sufficient to vanquish your more worthy colleague, Mr. Dunn. But before your onset, you addressed the God of armies; though instead of contenting yourself with asking that he would teach your hands to war, and your fingers to fight; — or that he would enable you by sound speech to convince the gainsayers; and, by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to put to flight the armies of the aliens, — as though conscious that were your opponents allowed fairly to meet you, your qualifications would be found unequal to the service in which you had volunteered, you prayed that God would paralyze their hands, and parch their tongues! You attempt, indeed, to qualify or soften this, by the statement, that your imprecations referred, not to the disturbers of Wesleyanism, but to the enemies of Christ: a qualification, which, if accepted, would not take away, though it might somewhat mitigate the offensive or horrifying character of your language. But I demur to accept of this qualification, on the following grounds: — A man whose years, and intelligence, and christian experience enable him to judge, and whose memory and *peculiar* habits of attention in religious exercises entitle his testimony to superior weight, affirms, most unequivocally, that, when representing to the divine Being the conflicts and perils of *your own church*, and the internal and external foes that are arrayed against it, you prayed, with unusual vehemence, that "their hands might be paralyzed, and their tongues made to cleave to the roof of their mouths." The same testimony, in substance, is given by others. Now when it is remembered that these persons were endeavouring calmly and profitably to follow you in devotion, with minds unruffled, until the strangeness of your subject and manner excited their surprise, and the language of imprecation shocked their feelings, while

you were the subject of agitation, perhaps previously produced, or, as is stated, strongly evinced in that part of your address; could I even put out of my recollection the delinquencies to which I have slightly adverted, yet in order to prefer your representation to theirs, I must do violence to some of the plainest principles on which the rules of judgment rest, by the supposition, that turbulence of feeling is more favourable than calmness to accurate recollection. For these reasons, then, I feel obliged to believe, that the Rev. J. M'Lean, in Norfolk-street Chapel, Sheffield, on the forenoon of Sunday, November 23rd, 1834, when professedly engaged in leading the devotions of a congregation of Wesleyan Methodists, asked, that God would paralyze the hands, and parch the tongues of some parties, supposed to be the enemies of their church. Many of your hearers, therefore, in consequence of what you afterwards said, supposed, and naturally enough, that the imprecation had especial reference to me, in conjunction, perhaps, with Dr. Warren and a few others. Nor am I at all certain that this was not the case. At the same time, I fear it not. The impiety and presumption of such a malediction may shock my feelings or awaken disgust, yet so long as it is written, "The curse causeless shall not come," it creates no more apprehensions of danger, than would be created by the rustling of a leaf or the wafting of a feather by the evening breeze. But, Sir, though I never before heard of any protestant minister, when professedly leading the devotions of a public congregation, having dared to apply language like yours, to the bitterest and most formidable enemy of his sect, or even of *the Christian Church*, and though I believe that very few of your own community possess the necessary dispositions for such an act, yet I am not unaware that threats of divine judgments, more or less distinct, according to circumstances, have been employed to secure the continued adherence of your people, and to deter them from asserting that liberty to which some of them deemed themselves entitled: and that afflictive events befalling persons who had become offensive, by exposing what they conscientiously believed to be highly objectionable principles or practices among you, have been attributed to the awakened vengeance of an offended God. To pass by other cases which might be adduced, such was the representation given of the death of Mr. Kilham; a man whose sincere and devout piety, purity of motive, and uncompromising independence, honourably distinguished him from contemporaries, by some of whom he was first betrayed, and then forsaken. I had hoped, indeed, that views so narrow and selfish were giving place to more perfect knowledge, and a purer charity, having of late heard less of them than heretofore; and in spite of your example I will cling to the belief that such is the case: but you, Sir, must be left as an exception: for if we are to credit the testimony adduced, you, in your devotions, have recognized the principle on which such representations rest; carried it out to its utmost limit; and at once sunk your character as a Christian minister, outraged the feelings of the congregation you were employed to benefit, and insulted that God you were professedly addressing, by calling upon him to mark as the objects of his vengeance, all who dared either to speak or write against the erroneous principles or oppressive acts of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. And were your people as willing to imbibe your vindictive feelings as you appear to be to infuse them, soon should we hear more

than we have ever heard before, of divine vengeance desired, prayed for, and inflicted, for acts which both God and every truly liberal man must approve.

But, Sir, were I even to accept your own representation of the language imputed to you, the censure deserved would not be much less severe. Did you expect to gain converts or credit to Christianity, by praying that God would paralyze the hands and parch the tongues of its opponents? Did the author of our faith *thus* pray concerning his *murderers*? Did an apostle thus pray concerning even the monster, Nero, by whose sword he was to suffer martyrdom? Do, Sir, before you permit your violence so deeply to stain both yourself and our common Christianity, pause, and ask yourself, whose example you are imitating? whether that of your divine Master, who said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" or that of his disciples, when they asked that fire might be made to descend from heaven upon his enemies; and who met with the merited rebuke, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of: the Son of man is come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." The spirit, Sir, that ardently breathes in your maledictions, according to your own shewing of it, is the persecuting spirit of Popery in its worst days; and the same which in a more mature stage led to cursing "with bell, book, and candle," and destroyed the bodies of men for the good of their souls. I rejoice, however, to think that it stands, where I hope it will ever stand, unparalleled in the history of Protestantism; nor do I know of any of those who have most warmly contended "for the faith delivered to the saints," by whom language like yours has been employed, even towards the most malignant enemies of God and his Son.

Your language in prayer, was, however, only a fit prelude to the discourse and address which were to follow. Having been furnished through the medium of a friend, with a written account of these, by one of your own members, I take the liberty to give it; simply premising, that having been read to you for the purposes of correction, &c., you objected, as I am informed, to two expressions only, both of which I have omitted:

"Mr. M'Lean, in his Sermon on Sunday morning, after having in a most shameful and unbecoming manner, dealt out invective on all those members of our society who are endeavouring by every lawful and Christian means, to procure a redress of our grievances, declared that a council had been held lately in hell, and that some men, even ministers among us, who once had run well, were endeavouring to carry the wicked counsels into effect; telling his congregation he wished them to mark particularly what he was going to state, for he could not withhold it from them.—That a minister of another denomination, nearly allied to our own, who did not reside twenty miles from Sheffield, 'I mean Mr. Allin,' had taken advantage of the present disturbed state of our societies, and had daringly interfered, by publishing a letter [or pamphlet, or address, for I do not remember which,] addressed to the members of our societies, in which he impiously attempted to spread discord and disaffection amongst them; persuading them not to sit down with the conduct of their preachers, but to leave their Connexion to swell that of his own. He declared there was no mistake, for he had seen one to which Mr. Allin had attached his name. In the course of his remarks on the subject, he stigmatized Mr. Allin in a manner, not only unbecoming, but most disgraceful. In fact, I never heard in my life, such a piece of personal invective from the pulpit, in any place or by any person, making the least pretensions to Christianity, no, nor any thing approaching to it. I am sorry I cannot call to mind the particular expressions used by Mr. M'Lean, when stigmatizing Mr. Allin, but I know they were such as raised in my mind, the most revolting feelings.

Indeed, I was both astounded and disgusted, scarcely being able to believe my ears. I remember that Mr. M'Lean, in the midst of his most disgraceful attack upon Mr. Allin, said that he wished Mr. Allin was by his side, for he would say the same,—denouncing his attempts to produce disunion as most infamous, holding him up to public execration in a manner peculiar to himself. Those who know his warmth, may perhaps form some faint idea,—but those only. After reading over the above, I do most sincerely believe I have not in the least overcharged the picture, for wishing not to say any thing untrue, I have been careful to be below rather than beyond the strict line of truth. I do assure you I was both grieved and disgusted."

"Nov. 25, 1834."

Similar feelings to those described in this communication were produced in the minds of others. One pious female, *a member of yours*, states, that agitation, produced by mingled feelings of astonishment and disgust, caused her whole frame to shake, and at times rendered her almost insensible; while other members of yours left you in disgust. Most happy, Sir, should I have been could I but have stated, that, your anger having spent itself, you here suffered the conflict to close;—that on returning to your home, what you had felt, and the feelings you had seen excited in others, had led you to reflect on the awful extent to which you had desecrated the Sabbath, the pulpit, and the name of that God whose messenger you professed to be;—and that, deeply humbled under a conviction of your misdoings, you had afterwards manifested a different spirit. But, no: the principal parts of the same tragedy were repeated in the evening in Brunswick Chapel; at which time, though there was less of profanity, yet of personal abuse, bitterness and violence, there was little diminution. The cause you allege for the abuse so plentifully heaped upon me, I shall examine in my next letter; in which I shall give the address to the Delegates in Manchester, with a *true* account of the circumstances under which it was prepared, and the parties to whom it referred; as well as notice the remarks prefixed to your pirated edition of it, and *some* of the gross inaccuracies and imputations of an anonymous libeller, whose name must be concealed, lest he should be visited with that public reprobation which the author of such a production so well deserves.

There are, Sir, as you are aware, other allegations arising out of your performances on the 23rd ult., but which I at present pass over, not because I either deem them unimportant, or doubt their truth, but because I am not influenced by that malignity towards Wesleyan Methodism and Wesleyan Methodist preachers, which some have imputed to me. I do, however, wish you to see *yourself*, as well as the precipice on which you and some of your brethren stand. Shutting your eyes to the defects and evils of your system, you look only at the good accomplished, till it becomes the object of an admiration almost idolatrous; and spiritual pride,—impetuous passion — and ungoverned resentment — with their odious train of maledictions and persecutions, are the natural result.

With the sincerest prayers for your welfare and increased usefulness,
I am, Rev. Sir, yours, &c.,
T. ALLIN.

Sheffield, December 6, 1834.

LETTER II.

REV. SIR,—To take an unfair advantage of an opponent, or even of an adversary, is a characteristic of littleness of mind, and indicates a consciousness either that the cause espoused cannot be defended by honourable means, or that, through incompetency, the espouser cannot so defend it. That this has been done by you, most persons of whose judgment I have received any information, except your pledged partisans, have already pronounced. But in that judgment, if I am not much mistaken, many others will concur when “the *entire* subject is *fairly* before them.” An address, prepared under circumstances which shall hereafter be explained, you first brought before the public in the *pulpit*; and, after having laboured with your characteristic ardour to degrade me in places where you knew I was not present, and where, had I been, I should have had no liberty to defend myself, as though to shew with what rapidity you could move in the dishonourable career you had thus commenced, you proceeded to *publish* it;—an address which was not yours, and which you had no more *right* so to appropriate, than an atheist would have to publish for his own benefit, the “Discourses on Atheism.”

In proof, too, that your object was not to supply the public want, as intimated by your printer, nor yet simply to bring “the *entire* subject *fairly* before” the public, as professed by yourself, but to gain an additional opportunity of giving your own account of the author and his work, and thus of prejudicing the public mind in your own favour, the pirated address was not published alone, evidently from a fear that some would not see it through the perverted medium you had placed before your own eyes, and that unless you could contrive to place the same medium before theirs, your object would, after all, be defeated. That medium you therefore furnished. And it may be, some, under the influence of the deception thus practised upon them, have joined you in your revilings. But, surely, if they make the least pretensions to candour, having admitted the charge, they will carefully weigh the defence; and then I hesitate not to predict the termination of their delusion, and the shortness of your triumph.

The following is a brief, yet accurate compendium of the circumstances which led to the address:—Your district meetings and Conference having trampled on the rights of both preachers and people, more especially in relation to the Leeds case and the great question of Church Reform—the latter of which had led to the humiliation of Mr. Hudson; also, first to the suspension of the Rev. J. Stephens, and then to his resignation, lest you should have the honour of expelling him—dissatisfaction or disgust had been awakened, not only in the minds of many belonging to other Christian churches, but also among your own members and friends in different parts of the kingdom; and which feelings they had expressed, in various publications, in no measured terms. Separations from your societies *had, there-*

fore, taken place, not merely in Ashton, where Mr. Stephens resided, but in almost every part of the circuit, as well as in Halifax, and several parts of the Oldham circuit ; and separations, which, in some cases, had left you but a small minority behind. In other instances separations *were determined upon*, so soon as Mr. Stephens and his friends had matured and made known their plans ; while in other cases it was undetermined whether at once to unite with the separatists, or to remain with you, to employ whatever influence might be possessed or obtained, in securing the extension of liberal views, and the adoption of such measures as should ultimately oblige you to reform your constitution. A general meeting of these parties, or rather of delegates representing them, was called by public advertisement, to be held in Manchester, September 24, 1834, to determine respecting their future religious associations, and to take into consideration the measures to be adopted to induce the great body of the Wesleyan Methodists to unite with other classes of dissenters on the church question. The parties who had left, or had already resolved on doing so, had to determine whether they would join some religious body already formed, or add another to the existing Christian denominations ; and the remainder had to state whether they would make common cause with the others, or whether, by keeping up and extending agitation in your body, or by withholding supplies—both of which measures had been *previously* proposed—force you at last to yield to their demands, and adopt a more liberal constitution. With the general view of the parties about to assemble, I was made acquainted. I knew that some would be for leaving you at once ; while others, bound to you by endearing recollections, family relationships, and pecuniary responsibilities, purposed to remain ; *only, however, under an expectation of being able to accomplish the objects already stated*. I also knew that several of the other parties would propose a union with the New Connexion, while others would prefer the establishment of another religious sect. Such were the *only* parties to whom the address was directed : parties, the great majority of whom, were not, *at the time*, connected with you ; and the remainder were with you in a state which your Conference has pronounced to be “schism :” a state, therefore, more dangerous to themselves, and I should imagine less desirable to you, than entire and honourable separation.

Believing, as I did, and as I do still, that the “delegates” and their constituents had abundant cause of complaint in the proceedings of your Conference and the doings of its agents, and that these naturally arose, not out of adventitious circumstances, but, *out of your despotic principles of government*, by which the churches are excluded from all direct voice and influence in those assemblies properly denominated legislative, and in which, therefore, they have the deepest interest, I deemed it right to express to them my views of the occasion of their meeting, as well as of that object deemed by me the most important one—their future religious associations. With respect to that object, I knew the great question would be, first, whether those united with you would remain in a state denominated by you “schism,” and for purposes which you denounce as factious, or at once leave and make common cause with the others ? And, second, whether the separatists would form themselves into a distinct religious denomination, on the congregational plan,—or join the New Connexion ?

And, Sir, believing that the spiritual welfare and peace of *all* these parties, and the public interests of religious liberty, would be best promoted by a union with the Methodist New Connexion, it became me, as a matter of public duty, openly and honestly to propose that course.

Such is a brief statement of the circumstances under which the address was drawn up ; hastily, indeed, as my friends well know, and therefore not in every respect so cautiously as perhaps it might have been ; and such are the principles by which I was actuated. The circumstances I challenge any one to deny, and the address will be found to accord with them ; the principles I shall hereafter defend. This, then, Sir, and nothing less than this, “is the *entire subject*” to which my address has relation ; and these are the only relations it has to that subject. These, therefore, are the circumstances necessary to a correct understanding of it, and without which “the *entire subject*” is *not* “fairly before” the public. That when you published it with your “Introductory Remarks,” you should have believed that you had placed “the *entire subject fairly before*” your readers, I cannot conceive : as in order to this, I must give you credit for such profound ignorance of the affairs of your own church, as is incompatible with the knowledge assumed as the basis of your remarks ; and ignorance which would be indeed disgraceful to any man occupying a public situation in the church, and professing to feel a peculiar interest in its order and prosperity. Sir, I feel myself called upon distinctly to avow my conviction, that some of the preceding circumstances were perfectly known to you, but were studiously concealed, lest, if stated, they might prevent or weaken the impression you wished to make to my prejudice. Your own conscience, unless it is more inert than I think it to be, will support this charge.

The preceding statements will enable the public to ascertain the degree of truth contained in your first proposition—that “the persons to whom the letter was written, were *at the time*, members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society.” Had you intended your readers simply to understand, that *some* of the persons addressed were of this class, there were forms of expression sufficiently numerous, and which your ingenuity could easily have supplied, for the purpose of stating that fact. But passing by all those forms, and without giving the most distant hint that there were any other parties, you have affirmed, without exception, that “*The persons—were at the time*” &c., thus not only leaving, but leading your readers to conclude, what some of them at least have concluded, notwithstanding what appears to the contrary in the address itself, that the persons for whom it was intended, were, without exception, at the time, members of yours. Now, Sir, when you published that proposition, you knew that the address was designed for parties *who had seceded from you*, on account of your conduct on the Church-reform question, and your treatment of Mr. Stephens ; as well as for some others, who, at the time, were members indeed, but whose affections had been *previously* alienated from your polity, and who were disposed to remain, only on the consideration that they could *oblige you to change it*. And before you published a proposition so unqualified, you ought to have known, that the proportion of the latter parties was but small. But, Sir, had it been otherwise—had all the parties addressed been *at the time* members of yours, yet I maintain, that con-

considering the opinions entertained both by myself and them-- the situation in which they stood—and the professed purposes of their meeting—I had an indisputable right to address them as I did. In order, however, to conceal such right, or to discredit it, while you evade any fair and manly discussion, you attempt to fritter down the points of difference, or the grounds of complaint, into insignificant trifles. They are “theoretical defects,” even “the existence of which is yet to be *proved*”—and “mere circumstantial,” with which, amidst so many important matters that lie before us, it is criminal to meddle ; or by the disturbing of which, the compact, into which we are supposed to have entered as supporters of Bible Societies, &c., is dissolved. As you have not favoured us with the principles on which these views are founded, and as the subject is of great practical importance, I beg to present, for correction if you please, the following brief statements. I have heretofore thought, that every man, as an intelligent, but more especially as a morally accountable being, possesses an unquestionable right to direct the attention of his fellows to *whatever is considered by him as evil* ; and, at least by the presentation of truth, to labour for its removal : and that, though prudence, or charity, or friendship, may influence the exercise of this right, yet it cannot be taken away. And, Sir, I have never yet seen reason to believe that the most important objects of attention and pursuit, are to be the only ones ; or that, in those objects, because they are supremely important, every other is to be merged. I know that courtesy and kindness are due to the *persons* of men, especially to the truly good, however weak or erring ; and that the *opinions* of such as are eminent in wisdom, are entitled to deference and respect : but I have yet to learn that I am not at liberty to form my own views respecting both the opinions themselves, and the practices to which they give birth ; and to express those views, in terms which shall correctly designate both, according to the character which they appear to me to bear : so that I may ascribe weakness, or error, or folly, even to a wise and good man, with respect to some particular opinion entertained by him, or some particular system, or branch of a system, to which he has attached himself, without either impeaching his general integrity, or degrading his general character, or justly forfeiting his esteem. Nay, farther than this, I have hitherto imagined that particular principles, or actions, or systems, or parts of systems, conscientiously believed to be bad, may be designated according to their supposed obliquity, and the supporters of them advised either to withdraw that support and call for a removal of the evil, or attach themselves to that which better deserves their regard ;—and I have thought that all this may be done, without any violation of Christian charity. And farther still ; when the evil character of particular principles is manifested by their destructive effects—when, by existing circumstances, the connexion subsisting between them is made so apparent that the careless are obliged to see it—and when, by these means, Providence seems to be at once pointing out the evil, disposing the minds of men to abandon it, and loudly calling upon them to do so, then, I conceive, that not only does liberty allow, but duty requires those under whose observation the evils fall, to “Cry aloud—and shew the house of Jacob their sins ?” then, Sir, charity itself, which looks at the public, as well as at particular parties, requires that the axe be directed to the *root* of the tree, the bitter fruits of

which are exciting nausea and disgust ; so that, by the removal of the cause, similar effects may in future be prevented. Proceeding on these principles, he who believes speculative Antinomianism to be unscriptural in its character and immoral in its tendencies, though not unfrequently combined with much of truth, and holiness, and usefulness, must feel himself bound to oppose it ; though, so long as its tendencies are kept in check, either by other and better principles, or by adventitious circumstances, the warning voice may be raised in vain. But when, in some strongly marked case, its tendencies are made signally manifest, he will embrace the opportunity, as furnished by the God of Providence, to hold up the monster to the execration it deserves ; and were even a Dr. Hawker to throw over it the mantle of his amiable spirit and holy life, yet would he feel himself bound by the claims of truth, of holiness, and of charity itself, to pronounce it odious, and call on its adherents to abandon its cause.

These, Sir, are the principles by which I have endeavoured to regulate my conduct. During the last thirty years, I have seen what appeared to me, *the despotic* character of your ecclesiastical polity : its tendency also to corrupt you, both by infusing an inordinate love of power, and by betraying you into oppressive, arbitrary measures ; and at the same time, deeply to injure your people, by withholding their rights, and subjecting them to inequitable acts. I have also publicly and privately avowed the convictions I entertained, and under which I felt constrained to act. Still you went on, until multiplied aggressions brought the true character and tendencies of your principles more fully out before your own people and the world. Thousands of your members saw their degraded situation, and felt their bondage. Many threw off the yoke ; whilst others were disposed to bear it a little longer, that they might try, by "factious opposition," as it is termed among you, to oblige you to remove it from their necks. I saw, Sir, those encroachments and abuses of power, (some of which shall be given in my next) by which "the peace" of thousands, if not "of the whole Christian world, was offended against ;" and those rights invaded, and those principles of liberty violated, without which, peace itself becomes worthless, and the most painful strife honourable. To those, therefore, who felt something of the injury done both to themselves and the common cause of Christianity, I spoke plainly and honestly—I lamented their wrongs—I censured the doers of the wrong—I combated the ignorance and prejudice of which I had too much reason to believe they were the subjects—and I pointed them to the principles and dwelling-place of true liberty. That in doing this, I was influenced solely, or even principally by sectarian views, I most unequivocally deny ; and in support of that denial, I appeal to the address itself, as well as to the whole course of my conduct towards those religious bodies, in which Christian freedom is combined with the doctrines of the cross. Sir, only yield to your churches that liberty to which I believe they are entitled, and which, so far as the Head of the Church may give me ability and influence, ours shall have, and I am satisfied. From my sectarian spirit, predominant and violent as you would represent it to be, you shall not hear another whisper of complaint, nor see another effort to disturb your tranquility. Would you but do this, such is my sectarianism, that I would go down to the

grave content to see the light of our little planet lost in the superior splendour of your sun ; and the ultimate extinction of my own *sect* rendered inevitable, by the liberality, the expansion, and the surpassing usefulness of yours. At the same time I ought openly to state, that should you resolve to adhere to your present principles, and pursue your present course, neither your complaints nor maledictions, neither the blackening process of personal defamation ten thousand times repeated, nor any fear of the displeasure or opposition of any man, will deter me from employing every means which Providence may furnish and conscience dictate, in denouncing your principles as despotic, and your conduct as unjust.

You state, Sir, that the existence of “theoretical defects in the government of Wesleyan Methodism” “is yet to be *proved*.” But if that is defective which is contrary to the dictates of enlightened reason—if that is defective which is at variance with the principles and facts embodied in the New Testament—if that may be pronounced defective which is opposed to almost all other protestant churches—and if that is infallibly defective which is naturally productive of much evil, both to the governors and the governed—then may it safely be concluded that “the government of Wesleyan Methodism” *is* defective. The proof furnished by enlightened reason and the New Testament alone, is of itself more than sufficient ; and has convinced thousands even among the Wesleyans, as well as tens of thousands of other classes of Methodists. Before Wesleyan Methodism existed, that proof convinced most classes of the Reformed,—whether established, or not established ; whether Presbyterians, Congregationalists, or Moravians. These all maintained, and they still maintain, that the people, who constitute the church, and for whose benefit ordinances and offices are appointed, are entitled to a voice and direct influence in the enactment of necessary laws, and the transaction of important affairs. All these classes must therefore suppose that Wesleyan Methodism is defective in a *fundamental principle* of government—viz., *the right of the people to a voice in the management of their own concerns*. And yet defectiveness is not *proved*! Tell us, then, that the existence of God is not proved, because the atheist disbelieves it ; or that the divine mission of the Redeemer is not proved, because rejected by Jews and Deists ; or that his godhead is not proved, because it is not admitted by Unitarians ; or that not anything is proved, which any one chooses to deny!—We, however, are not yet at the end of your subterfuges : for this, if proved, is a “mere circumstantial,” that is, as I understand it, one of those trifling, unimportant things, which, having no injurious influence on the dispositions, or conduct, or rights of any party concerned, ought not to be made a subject of contention. How this comports with the claims set up of late by you, to a *divine right* to govern the church alone, I do not understand. Or, were the case as thus represented, yet, to an impartial observer, it would seem that you would no more be justified in contending *for* such a “circumstantial,” than any one else in contending *against* it. But, Sir, to tell us that the right of *any* society to a voice in every thing relating to its own government, is, in this low sense of the term, a “mere circumstantial,” is to tell us, either that you do not understand wherein true liberty consists, or that you

deem it of little worth. Try, however, to degrade it as you may, the right you would thus diminish or conceal, remains *that* "circumstantial" which forms the broad and well-defined line between a liberal government and a despotic one, and between a free people and one enslaved :—it is *that* "circumstantial," in defence of which, in civil society, it has justly been accounted the highest point of glory to suffer and die ; while lightly to esteem it, has with equal justice been deemed a characteristic of the stupidity which knows not how to appreciate the highest earthly good, or of the venality and baseness which will sacrifice that good on the altar of inglorious ease, or sensual pleasure :—it is *that* "circumstantial" which tyrants view with deadliest hate, and for which patriots contend even unto blood. Nor is it less intimately connected with religious, than it is with civil privileges. The neglect of *that* "circumstantial" produced in the church most of the errors that corrupted, the dissensions that rent, and the persecutions that devastated it. Out of *that* neglect Popery arose, with all its usurpations, and superstitions and crimes ; and out of the same neglect, the *spirit* of Popery is rising among you, and some of its characteristics are already assuming a distinctness of form, which the careful observer cannot but perceive. Sir, the concentration of power in *Christian ministers*, and its subsequent abuse by them, is *that* "circumstantial" which has produced the odious thing so characteristically, yet, alas ! so justly denominated PRIESTCRAFT ;—a thing from which, whether I see it in the shadow or the substance, near or afar off, I shrink with irresistible, and, what you may deem, morbid abhorrence. Of all the curses which have impeded the progress of "the glorious gospel of our God and Saviour," this has been the heaviest and the most terrible ; and of those storms which have ravaged to the widest extent, and scattered the mightiest mischiefs, and produced the most utter desolation, *this* has been the rousing and directing spirit.

You may imagine that by denying to the church its rights—by denominating those rights, "mere circumstantial"—and by defending priestly usurpations and injustice, you are serving the cause of Christianity, checking the course of abounding wickedness, and depriving infidels of those weapons from which religion has the most to dread. But at such imaginations infidels laugh. Were they to engage you as a secret spy and crafty counsellor in their cause, such is the precise course they would direct you to adopt. And were Satan indeed to "hold a council in hell," according to your representation, and were he to display but half the wisdom and craft which you would attribute to him, his advice would be, that you and your compeers should continue to hold with unyielding grasp the power you now possess, and exercise it to the same unrighteous extent. Sir, to *purge away* corruptions, and not to vindicate them, is the only plan to wither the arm of infidelity ;—and cheerfully to surrender to the people their rights, instead of withholding them, is the likeliest method to ensure the purity, and peace, and prosperity of the church.

The most terrible of all the terrific consequences of my conduct, you reserve for the close of your remarks. You say, "If such conduct is to be manifested by one Christian denomination towards another in reference to mere *circumstantial*, any thing like union amongst the different sects is at an end. The basis of Bible and Missionary, Tract and Temperance societies must be contracted to the limits of our respective parties."—I must crave your indulgence, Sir, when I state, I was not before aware that the basis of the Bible Society was an agreement, either recorded or understood, that its supporters would lower the standard by which they had previously judged of each others' peculiarities ; or relax their exertions for the removal, from any portion of the church, of whatever they had considered as evil, whether called a "mere circumstantial" or not. I had thought that these matters were left untouched ; and that, instead of attempting to narrow the liberty before claimed by the different

sects, the promoters of the Bible Society had left them unfettered, to exercise it to the fullest extent. Such, I am sure, were their professions; and such, I am happy to add, has been their practice. You may attempt to foist into the agreement an interpolation of your own, binding all to shut their eyes against the crying evils of your government, or to cease from publicly denouncing your oppressive acts: but no one, except yourselves, will ever recognize the forgery as an original term of agreement, or practically submit to its claims. Will you prevail on the Friends to believe that they have entered into a contract with the projectors and supporters of the Bible Society, no more to denominate churches, "steeple-houses," and stated ministers, "hirelings?" Will you induce conscientious dissenters to suppose that they have thus surrendered their liberty to call and to attend public meetings to petition, and to try to induce as many as possible to join in petitioning, that they may share privileges from which the church has debarred them—that the prerogatives of bishops may be limited to spiritual things—and that the christian ministry may be left to rest on the affections and voluntary support of the people? or that they are pledged not to write or distribute tracts, to whatever extent they please, on the evils of establishments, and the necessity of entire reform? Or will you persuade even all pious members of the establishment that they have thus incurred an obligation no more to think dissent an evil, or no more to preach and write against it as such? No, Sir; I am sure you will not; I hope you will not. By the friendly intercourse which such societies create, unnatural jealousies may be subdued, asperities softened down, charity enlarged and invigorated, and even differences in opinion lessened: and in these, as *effects*, I rejoice; but as the *basis* of such associations, I utterly repudiate them. On the boards of a Bible Society, I see the warmest and most public advocates and opposers too of what you call "circumstantial," but which, though deemed little, when compared with some other things, yet in themselves and their results are accounted of sufficient importance to merit a share of attention. And cannot they forget, or merge their differences, while promoting a great cause in which they have a common interest? Yes, Sir; and I glory in the name of Christian, when I see men, who, in the consciousness and exercise of that freedom which is one of the honours of our common nature, differ in sentiment on subjects felt to be important, and act energetically upon their convictions, and who, while giving each other credit for all the excellencies which they or their respective systems are believed to possess, honestly point out defects or corruptions, and call loudly for reform; yet on great public occasions, and in support of public institutions, can merge all differences in first principles—recognize their common relation to the same Lord—give to each other the hand of a common fellowship, and breathe only the charity which does good to all men, especially to the household of faith. I have seen this Christian magnanimity—this true elevation of mind—this expansion of soul—and I have felt my nature and my religion honoured by it. But this is an elevation of which *you* can form no conception; an expansion to which you cannot stretch:—well, be it so!—but then, do be satisfied to measure yourself by your own standard; and if you are dwarfish or contracted, do not make your own littleness either the universal or even the common measure of your species. In the name of our common Christianity, which you would thus dishonour,—in the name of many of all sections of the Christian Church, not even excepting your own, whom you would thus degrade,—I denounce your doctrine as the fiction of intellectual weakness or sectarian bigotry. If, Sir, you find any pleasure in views like these, do be content to enjoy it in your closet, but never again proclaim them to the world.

I am, Sir,

Your's, very sincerely,

T. ALLIN.

Sheffield, December 13th, 1834.

TO THE

WESLEYAN METHODIST DELEGATES ASSEMBLED IN MANCHESTER.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

THE circumstances under which you have assembled are peculiarly interesting to every mind duly impressed with the importance of religion, or wishful for the extension of the interests of Christian liberty. You and the various bodies which you represent have had your eyes opened, either by reading and reflection, or by the wrongs you have seen perpetrated, to the oligarchical despotism that governs among the Wesleyans; defacing the beauty, disturbing the peace, and diminishing the usefulness, of one of the noblest productions of the providence and grace of God which the present age has seen. You have witnessed the gradual developement, and the approach to gigantic power, of principles which not only deny to you all judgment and voice in the affairs of your own churches, except so far as the oligarchs choose to *allow* you to think and speak, but even trench on your civil liberties, and threaten to bind you as closely to the chariot wheels of your masters, and to drag you as servilely after them, in civil, as in ecclesiastical politics. Injured in your rights, and some of you insulted in your persons, by men whom you have been instrumental in bringing out of obscurity, and for whose usefulness and support your sacrifices and privations have been many, you have wisely and heroically resolved to throw off the yoke, and to claim the liberty to which the laws of God and your country alike entitle you. The object of your association is one of the noblest the human mind can propose; and is second in importance only to the great work of salvation itself; a work, indeed, which, in many cases, it unquestionably involves. The eyes, therefore, of the religious public are turned upon you. The friends of liberty are elate with hope: the abettors of despotism are filled with fear. In your present association the one see the cloud of glory placed before the Israel of God, about to shed upon them the light of divine guidance, and destined to lead them from a land where abundant provision has been combined with cruel bondage, to a happier inheritance, in which, together with provision equally rich and plenteous, they will share the immunities of the freed-men of Christ Jesus. But the others behold a cloud portentous and appalling; combining in itself the elements of destruction; and about to involve their usurpation in darkness and ruin. Their only hope is either in your disunion, or in your attempts to raise a structure, too frail ultimately to resist the adverse powers that will be arrayed against it. The situation in which you are placed, is, therefore, one of the highest responsibility. In your hands is placed the power to benefit or injure, to elevate or depress the cause of freedom among the Wesleyan Methodists; and either to augment its strength, and multiply its triumphs, or to betray it into the hands of its enemies. And if ever perfect disinterestedness, Christian patriotism, wise caution, and the sacrifice of personal prejudices and expectations, to great public principles, were imperative on any class of men, they press with all their claims, and with all their obligations, upon you.

Judging from information received from various quarters, two great questions are likely to come before you. First,—Will you and your constituents remain with the Wesleyan Methodists, in hope of effecting a more speedy and extensive reform in that body; or will you at once separate from it? Second,—In case of separation, what system of ecclesiastical polity will you adopt?

On the first question circumstances seem to leave but little room for diversity of sentiment. Many have already been put away, or driven to secede: and after the increase, and consolidation, and exercise of power, which the last Conference presented, but few will entertain the forlorn hope of effecting any speedy reform in that body; or

deem themselves recompenced, by the expectation of success, which at best is remote and uncertain, for the anxieties and privations of a violent and protracted conflict. It may, therefore be assumed, that the second question will be the principal subject for your consideration: and on that subject your candid attention is solicited to the following remarks.

The extension of the interests of religion, is the great end of the gospel ministry, and of all systems of ecclesiastical polity: and that system is the best, and the most worthy of adoption, which is best adapted to promote personal holiness, and to enlarge the kingdom of Christ. In the establishment of a system, however, adapted to human beings, whether in civil or religious society, some respect must be had to their relishes and previous habits, as well as to their absolute wants; since, by combining the offer of benefits, with circumstances repugnant to feelings and habits, an unwillingness may be produced, even to listen to the offer of them. Such being the case, the great problem to be solved, as the foundation of all your arrangements, is this—"What system is best calculated to meet the wishes and supply the wants of our constituents; and most extensively to promote the interests of religion in the world around us?"—To confine our views within narrower limits than these, or to suffer any considerations to induce you to compromise this object for the sake of any other, will be a betrayal of the most important trust, and a grievous offence against both God and man.

Now the assumption is probably correct, that both you and your constituents generally prefer not only the doctrines and religious ordinances, but also the discipline and itinerant ministry of Methodism; as being best adapted to that diversity of intellectual character and of spiritual wants, which both the church and the world present, as well as falling in most fully with Methodistic habits, and the tastes they have generated. Experience and observation have surely demonstrated to you, what the mere theorist must have observed, whose views have extended to all the circumstances of the case, that the varied ordinances, and itinerant ministry of Methodism, by their suitableness to the diversities actually existing among men in taste and capabilities, both natural and acquired; and by pressing into the best of causes that curiosity, which, for wise and beneficent purposes, is made a part of our intellectual constitution, is calculated to produce a far greater amount of good, on the whole, than a settled ministry, however high in piety or talents. Had you, therefore, to establish a system, irrespective of the habits and feelings produced by the usages of Methodism, your duty would be plain: but in connexion with them, it becomes far more so: nor can you, under such circumstances, do otherwise than preserve entire, your ministry, and ordinances, and discipline, without sacrificing the great cause you are associated to promote. From these you have received nothing but good; and the amount of good you have seen them instrumental in accomplishing, has often been to you subject of holy joy and triumph. It is only a despotic government of which you complain: and of this, you, and myriads more, have grievous cause of complaint. This is the plague-spot of Methodism. This has impressed upon it an image, as repugnant to every British, as to every Christian feeling—led to acts which outrage every principle of equity, and some of which have covered the faces of its best friends with shame—lessened its usefulness to an unknown extent—and caused the enemies of God, and of his truth, to blaspheme. But you may separate the precious from the vile; and while retaining in their highest perfection and efficiency, all those branches of the Methodistic economy, the results of which, in the salvation of your own souls, and of multitudes of your fellows, have so often gladdened your hearts, you may exchange its oligarchy, for a government, which, in excellence, deserves to be ranked with the most excellent parts of the Wesleyan economy.

Such a government already exists: and in the system of the **METHODIST NEW CONNEXION**, all those religious ordinances and means, to which, as instruments, Methodism is indebted for its success, are associated with a code of laws, which, in clearness and fulness are not surpassed, if equalled, by any religious denomination in these kingdoms; and with a form of government, requiring only to be known in order to its being esteemed, by every true lover of liberty; and which has received the approbation of men, eminent in wisdom and piety, among almost all classes of professing Christians. To enable you to form a correct judgment, a copy of the Rules is put into your hands with this address; together with a small tract on the principles and form of government adopted.

For the information of some of you, it may be necessary to state, that irrespective of Ireland, this religious community has in Great Britain 176 Chapels; 228 Societies;

57 Circuit, and 517 Local Preachers; and 14,383 Members. In addition to a fund from which the children of Preachers, while in active service, are supported, it has a Beneficent fund, for the support of supernumerary and superannuated Preachers, their widows, and orphan children; in which there is now the sum of £3,335 14s. 3d.: and it has an establishment for the publication of Magazines, Hymn Books, &c., with a clear capital of upwards of £2,000; and which during the past year, produced in profits £236 2s. 1d., applicable to the increase of its capital, and the support of the Benevolent Institutions of the Connexion.

This community too, having, under the guiding Providence and grace of God, risen superior to the weakness of its infant state, and to the difficulties that surrounded it at its commencement, and for some time impeded its progress, has of late been favoured with signal tokens of divine approval: so much so, that, notwithstanding what some of you may have heard of its want of prosperity, its increase in Britain, on an average of the last *ten* years, has been about one-third *more* than that of the Wesleyans, in proportion to the respective numbers of each. And, at the present moment, 16 New Chapels are in course of erection, or partially contracted for, in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Halifax, Newcastle, &c.; while peace and prosperity almost universally prevail. The Missionary Report for the present year, gives, in the following passage, only a just portraiture of the present state of the Connexion:

“ During a few years past, the Head of the Church has been graciously pleased to water many of our little hills of Zion with the plenteous dew of heavenly grace; making the wilderness and the solitary places glad, and causing the desert to bud and blossom as the rose. With increasing intelligence and wealth, a spirit of Christian zeal has been awakened, more pure in its character, and more general in its influence; warming hearts which had long been comparatively cold; rousing to action, powers which had long lain dormant; giving rapid extension to churches, which, during the lapse of years, had remained either stationary, or in a declining state; and clothing spots, which before presented the coldness and barrenness of winter, in all the freshness and beauty of the spring. The more perfect developement, too, of the liberal principles of government, by which the Connexion is so honourably distinguished, the natural result of the application of those principles to practice on a more extended scale, and of close and well-directed observation; and the fuller maturity of the various institutions of the Connexion, have dispelled the fears, and increased the confidence of its friends; while the progress of public opinion, and the more just and general appreciation of the value of true liberty, as distinguished from irresponsible power on the one side, and lawless anarchy on the other, justify the happiest anticipations with respect to the future; not only gilding it with the beams of hope, but throwing upon it the more perfect light of certainty.”

On the assumption, then, that you wish to retain all the excellencies of that system, the widely-extended benefits of which you have seen and participated, but to be freed from its despotic power, you may see in the Methodist New Connexion all your wishes anticipated, and your wants provided for. Here are plans of operation well tried, and matured,—stable institutions,—the doctrines, ordinances, discipline, and ministry of Wesleyan Methodism—and these in connexion with all the liberty you can desire.

Imagine not that by uniting with such a community, your own usefulness or honour will either be lost or diminished. So far from it, identified with the body, the success of that body will be the success of every member of it; its honour will be your honour; and, as you will share in its labours, to its rewards you will be justly entitled. Which, then, is best, to unite with a community, that, having tried its plans and surmounted its chief difficulties, has so far risen, as to be denominated by the highest Methodistic authority, “that now *respectable* body,” and is at present rapidly rising—a community that presents before you every possible opportunity of promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls—and the usefulness, the privileges, and the honours of which you may fully share,—or to attempt the establishment of something new; not merely with the certainty of being comparatively little among the tribes of Israel, but with the probability of ultimately finding your hopes disappointed, and your efforts rendered abortive; and your littleness or failure employed as an additional argument to prove the folly of secessions, and as another prop to support spiritual usurpation.

By an association, too, with such a community, you will most effectually serve the cause of public religious liberty. By bringing an accession of numbers, and strength, and influence, to a body already more dreaded than any other, by the enemies of

freedom among Methodists, you will assist in raising it to that elevation, and in giving it that attitude, which will command increased public attention and respect; augment its power of rapid extension; give an additional impulse to public feeling; destroy that monopoly of honour, to which your late masters aspire, and which is the chief support of their power; and thus, most effectually, and most speedily oblige them, first to relax, and then to relinquish, their unjust authority. The step thus urged on your attention, has already been taken by the seceders from the Wesleyans and by some of the Independent Methodists, in the north of England. These, together with the Rev. J. Forsyth, acting on the principle, that **UNION IS STRENGTH**, and being wishful to serve the great cause of religious liberty rather than to weaken it by unnecessarily multiplying divisions among its friends, have united, to the amount of at least nine hundred, with the Methodist New Connexion; and are now, jointly with the members of that community, giving an impulse to the public mind, and a prominence to liberal views, which cannot but gladden the heart of every enlightened lover of his country and his kind.

The same opportunity is before you; the same aid is asked at your hands; and again are you reminded, that for your improvement or abuse of such an opportunity, you are amenable to the tribunal of the religious public, and of the Judge of the whole earth. The occasion and object of your present meeting may well awaken feelings of holy jealousy. A spirit of enquiry has been excited, partly, perhaps, by your instrumentality, among a people often, and too justly blamed, for slavish adherence to their religious guides. The hand of authority having been employed to crush men whom they had been accustomed to venerate, and in whom they had seen nothing but piety and kindness—the ear of the oppressors having been deaf to the language of remonstrance and complaint—and their voices having been raised in thundering anathemas against the opposers of their aggressions—the men who read not, have been made to see; they who reasoned not, have, in spite of themselves, been forced to feel; and the conviction has flashed upon them, that fruits so corrupt must be produced by a corrupt tree; or that, however good the original stock might have been, a scion has been grafted upon it, alien from its nature, and to which the knife of excision ought to be applied. A great and mighty movement, therefore, has been produced; and principally to you is confided the task of giving to it a proper direction. You sustain the awful character of arbiters, in a cause involving the most momentous interests; and on your decision nothing less will depend, than the progress or retrogradation of liberty among the Wesleyans; the prosperity or depression, the value or worthlessness of the interests that may be established; and the spiritual condition of thousands yet unborn.

In laying these things thus plainly before you, there is not the most distant wish to dictate, or to prejudge. The man who claims liberty to choose for himself, is bound to concede the same liberty to others; nor with the most perfect exercise of that liberty is there any desire to interfere. But when facts are believed to be important—when dangers are seen to threaten—and when rules of duty are likely to be overlooked, it is imperative to point them out. Beyond these limits, the writer of this address has no wish; and in attempting this work, he has only imperfectly performed a duty equally owing to the God of truth and love—to you and your constituents—to that religious body with which he deems it his honour to be associated—and to the great cause of religious liberty.

T. ALLIN.

Broom-Lodge, Terrace, Sheffield, Sept. 23d, 1834.

LETTER III.

REV. SIR,—I scarcely need inform you that your professed defence is not likely to satisfy any persons of the propriety or rectitude of your conduct, except such as were previously resolved that nothing should dissatisfy them. We are to receive it, however, as the best defence you can make ; and, as you have no time for controversy, it is to be, apparently, the only one. This information somewhat surprises me. You found time to introduce the “controversy” into your pulpits ; which, by-the bye, are the most unfit places for it ; and in the true character of a hero of *your grade*, you will find time for it *there* again, as well as in your private and social circles, and leave me and others to “whine about personalities,” &c., as we please : but you will not submit your cause to the tribunal of the public. Let me assure you, then, that you shall suffer judgment to go by default ; for in case of similar transgressions, before that tribunal you shall again be arraigned. As I have announced for the present letter, an important general subject, I shall now only observe, in reference to your “Reply,” that “misrepresentation,” not “exposed,” but *exemplified*, would have been its most characteristic title. Some of the charges preferred against you are conveniently passed over in silence ; and others, though unintentionally confirmed, are not acknowledged ; some are denied, but not disproved ; while others, as well as my motives, and conduct, and some parts of my first letter, are grossly, not to say wilfully, misrepresented : conjecture is substituted for facts, and evasion and opprobious epithets for reasoning. If these, Sir, are among “the tactics of controversy” of which you speak, you understand them thoroughly ; and to all the honour they can confer, you are fully entitled. Strongly tempted as I am to confirm these statements by an analysis of your “reply,” yet, *for the present* I must proclaim a truce to these personalities. The public justly expect proof that I have not miscalled your system of government, or misrepresented its character. That proof it therefore becomes my duty to supply. This I also do the more readily, from a belief that its arbitrary character and deeply injurious effects, are not known by the public, nor yet sufficiently so by yourselves. Your associations and interests, and consequent prejudices, prevent you from seeing these in all their length and breadth : and if I can but partially succeed in bringing them out of the false glory which your imaginations throw around them, and in presenting them before you as they are seen by other eyes, I shall have done something in preparing both you and the public for their abandonment. Fully am I aware, Sir, that this part of my work will lead you and your fellow-calumniators to represent me as “the enemy of Methodism ;” and I unhesitatingly acknowledge, that had Methodism no other excellency of which to boast, than its government, its avowed and uncompromising enemy I would be. But you know as well as I do, that it has excellencies of a far higher order. The fulness and freeness of the salvation which it offers to the whole human race—the simplicity and variety

of the means it employs for the spiritual instruction of its members, and for their advancement in holiness—the adaptation of its means to exercise and improve the talents of all classes of its community, and to fit them for the various departments of usefulness—and the inducements it holds out to all, to employ their talents and improve their opportunities, in extending the knowledge of divine truth, and in promoting the salvation of their fellows,—*these* are the glories of Methodism: they are the vital functions of the body; and to all who understand them, they explain the secret of its success. And, Sir, in ardour of attachment to any or all of these, I will not yield to you, or to any of those who may be prevailed upon to join you in the senseless cry, that I am “an enemy to Methodism.” These form the simple and powerful, though, to a superficial observer, the apparently weak and complex machinery, by which, under God, it has achieved its wonders—raising myriads from the abyss of ignorance, and vice, and misery, to knowledge, and holiness, and happiness. The anti-scriptural and irresponsible power claimed and exercised by the circuit preachers among you, called by you, Methodism, and the removal of which you would represent as the destruction of every thing truly valuable, instead of being even essential to Methodism, is in fact an incubus, whose weight represses its powers, prevents their complete developement, and diminishes their active energy; while its unsightly form alarms the timid, and keeps back that resistance, before which it would soon disappear. The immense amount of good of which Methodism so justly boasts, has been effected, not by this monster, but by other means in spite of it; and had those means but been connected with a liberal government, that good might have been augmented to an extent of which neither you nor I can form a conception. The worst enemies of Methodism are those who would plead for crying abuses under names which a thousand benefits and associations have endeared; and who, under the cloke of zeal for what deserves the highest praise, would artfully conceal and defend those evils which merit entire and instant reprobation. It is as the *friend* of Methodism that I expose these evils—place them before you and your people—and, if you will not give them up, call upon your people to abandon them. Most earnestly do I wish that I could effect the former of these objects; as I should account it the greatest good I could confer on my species; and joyfully, in such a work, would I sustain a yet heavier load of that reproach, which, in such abundance, you have already tried to heap upon me. I call upon you, then, as a professed lover of truth, and justice, and liberty, steadily to view this part of your system; not in the light which names, or early associations, or interest, or honour may furnish; but in the light supplied by the New Testament, and the dictates of impartial reason.

The end of government, ecclesiastical as well as civil, is the preservation of the order and happiness of society, by securing the rights of all those classes of which it is composed, while it leaves to each all the liberty compatible with the perfect possession and enjoyment of those rights. When, therefore, we are told that forms of government are of trifling importance; and that that government is best, which is best administered; either a fallacy under a specious form is imposed upon us instead of truth, or a proposition is stated as a general one, which is true only to a very partial ex-

tent. It may, indeed, be true, that an absolute government is best adapted to the first stages of society, and to the lowest degrees of knowledge and virtue ; as it is unquestionably best adapted to an infant or youthful family : but as in the family, so in society, capabilities give rights ; and when forms of government invade these rights, and forbid their exercise, they become, *as forms*, unjust, and the parties injured by them are entitled to call for their removal. There are likewise great principles, which all systems of government, but more especially ecclesiastical systems, ought invariably to recognise and embody : principles which are highly important, on account both of the extent of their application and their direct influence on the liberty and happiness of men ; and which, though capable of various modifications in practice, yet never can be extensively merged, without ultimate injury to all classes of the community. In the government of Wesleyan Methodism, and the effects produced by it, we shall find abundant illustrations of the truth of these remarks.

The distinguishing and objectionable characteristic of your ecclesiastical polity, is the extensive, not to say enormous power vested by it in the hands of a particular order of men,—viz. the circuit preachers : to which order you belong. In Conference, which is your highest, or, properly speaking, your only legislative assembly, you claim to sit and act alone. There you are self-elected, your people having no voice in your appointment ; and there you are sole and exclusive legislators. This character no one is permitted to share with you. No member, however prudent or pious—no leader, local preacher, or other officer, however talented, or useful—must be admitted as the representative of any class of your people. The people may indeed petition ; but, as we shall see, even this right is fettered with restrictions unfavourable to its free exercise ; or when exercised in a way unfavourable to the views of the rulers in Israel, is met with neglect or rebuke. Without adverting to numerous complaints of neglect, and which appear to be too-well founded, I will furnish one example of the way in which you can meet petitioners with rebuke. The proceedings of your official authorities at Leeds, by which a thousand members were sacrificed to arbitrary power, and which, I hope to be able to notice, having awokened the indignation, as well as the astonishment of many of the best friends of Methodism, the Quarterly Meeting of the Rochdale Circuit addressed your Conference. The parties to that address profess, with the most evident sincerity, their “love to the preachers”—their “ardent attachment to pure Wesleyan Methodism”—their love of peace—and their abhorrence of dissensions and schism : they deny any connexion with the separatists at Leeds, and do not intend to vindicate their conduct ; but they plainly, yet in temperate and most respectful language point out instances in which the laws of the connexion had been violated, and former liberties endangered or curtailed : and they pray, that “as there is an evident *defect* in some of our rules, and an ambiguity in the expression of others,—with all deference and respect—we earnestly request the Conference to take these matters into their most serious consideration ;—to allow the rules in question to be so expressed as to prevent the possibility of their being misunderstood, allowing a due regard to the rights and privileges of the various orders of officers amongst us ;—to rescind the objectionable parts of the resolutions of last Conference, and adopt some

of a more scriptural and conciliatory character." They also request, that any "wrong opinions" entertained by them on these subjects might be pointed out, and promise on conviction, candidly to acknowledge them. Instead, however, of such an answer as they were entitled to expect, they were informed, that Conference would "continue" to maintain the rules which they had prayed might be explained and amended; and that their objections had been "distinctly brought forward and amply refuted" in Conference itself; and then they are thus rebuked:—"The present Conference directs us to express its regret that you should have occupied the time of your Quarterly Meeting, in framing a memorial on subjects so foreign from its proper business; and they solemnly admonish you, that the indulgence of such a spirit as this memorial manifests, would be found altogether incompatible with genuine spiritual prosperity amongst you, and the true furtherance of the gospel of Christ." From this instance it is easy to ascertain the limits within which the right of petition is of any worth among you, or can be exercised with impunity.—You indeed allow, "that if at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the societies at large, and such rule should be objected to at the first Quarterly Meeting in any given circuit; and if the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, be of opinion that the enforcing of such rule in that circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that circuit; it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly Meeting before the second Conference. But if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole connexion. Nevertheless, the Quarterly Meetings rejecting a new rule, shall not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention; but shall strive, by every means, to preserve the peace of the connexion."* This permissive regulation, as it is easy to see, is calculated only to delude by a shew of liberality, while no real liberty is in fact possessed. Any expression of disapprobation is here limited, first as to *time*: viz., the September Quarterly Meeting; when your Minutes of Conference, as is occasionally the case, may not have been in the hands of parties affected by the resolutions, many days before the holding of the Quarterly Meeting, and thus an objectionable enactment may not have been observed:—or should some have perceived its injurious bearing, there is not time to form mature views and plans, and to prepare effectual opposition. Then the dissatisfaction with any law must be limited, secondly, in *extent*: for such law is not to be made "a cause of contention," either by "publications, or public meetings, or otherwise." A restriction this, by which opposition is prevented from becoming formidable by concert; while opponents are debarred from obtaining a correct knowledge of their own strength. And after all, should any majority of meetings, however great, oppose, there is entire liberty reserved to confirm the law at the ensuing Conference, after which it becomes a part of Methodism, and a term of communion; and to oppose it, is to become obnoxious to the charge and penalties of rebellion. Your legislative authority is thus rendered exclusive and absolute: and, as you are not bound to consult any class of persons respecting what you shall do, so neither are you responsible to them for what you have done. It may indeed be said, that your au-

* See Dr. Warren's Digest, Vol. I. pp. 232, 233.

thority is limited by your acknowledged standard of doctrines, and by the deed of declaration : and to some extent it is so.* But notwithstanding these limitations, your legislative power can reach to many things deeply affecting the interests and just liberties of your people : and after late deviations and additions, and after the new doctrinal test set up on the subject of "the Eternal Sonship," it is easy to perceive that the limits are still extensive, within which you both may and will exercise your authority.

A few of the subjects to which that authority extends, I will just enumerate. It is within the prerogative of Conference to fix the salaries of the preachers, and the allowances for their children. This prerogative they exercised, when in 1814 they resolved, that "The preachers are permitted to receive the usual and regular allowances for their children, from their circuits, or from the contingent fund, until they attain the age of twenty years ; unless by marriage or otherwise, they shall at an earlier period become independent of their parents in point of pecuniary support." Conference determines the terms of membership—the qualifications and duties of officers—makes laws for the regulation of public worship and other religious ordinances, schools, &c.—and invests its own members with authority to execute the laws so made. It decrees at what meetings the business of the church shall be transacted, and what power shall be exercised therein by the superintendent, as its organ and instrument ; as well as what penalty shall be inflicted on the opposer of his authority, or on the attendant on a meeting pronounced by him "illegal." It invests him with the power to execute its will, and it possesses means to secure his obedience. Were Conference to pass a law, subjecting to excommunication every officer and member who should either call or attend any meeting for the purpose of promoting reform either in church or state, or who should originate or sign any petition on such a subject, the parties, whoever they might be, would have no remedy ; but the chapels, and schools, and preachers' houses they have built, must be left to others, and they must seek shelter and liberty elsewhere. I do not intend, indeed, either to affirm or insinuate that you are sufficiently blinded to the signs of the times to venture on such an experiment ; though after what you have done, and with the leaning manifested in certain high quarters, I should not pronounce it impossible ; but I do intend this to shew, that the absolute and irresponsible power of your Conference is more perfect and extensive than even your own people generally suppose it to be : and I affirm, that any impartial judge, understanding on the one hand the nature and claims of true liberty, and on the other hand the constitution and power of your Conference, must pronounce the two to be incompatible ; and must view the latter as a spiritual usurpation, dangerous both to the civil and ecclesiastical rights of the community.

* On this deed, intended by Mr. Wesley to legalize the Conference, it has been with too much truth remarked, that "it is exclusively the preachers'; and excepting a few necessary regulations for the holding of Conferences, supplying the circuits, and providing for the demise of the Connexion, there is no security, restriction, or in short any thing which can be called reciprocal in favour of the people. It is in reality the constitution of a Methodist hierarchy, giving and maintaining power, independent of, and uncontrollable by the people." *Apology for the Methodists of the New Connexion*, p. 8.

We have been told, Sir, of the liberties secured to your people by the "plan of pacification," and the "regulations" that accompanied and succeeded it. These have been designated by some, "The bulwarks of Methodistic liberties"—"The Magna Charta of Methodism," &c. But had the great charter extorted from King John, conferred no higher privileges on civil society than are secured to your body by the plan of pacification, &c., the praises lavished upon it would neither have been bestowed nor deserved. Passing over for the present the circumstance, that some of the privileges supposed to have been secured by that plan, were not at all conferred, as your older preachers well know, and as your people at Rochdale and some other places have found out, *your exclusive legislative authority* remains untouched by it; nor is any order of persons among you empowered either to share in that authority, or to control its exercise. So tenaciously have you adhered to this, that when in 1797, many of your circuits, and some of your most intelligent and pious members asked, "that the people might be represented in Conference by delegates, chosen by, and from amongst the people,—and when the delegates assembled in Leeds, amongst whom were men of the highest moral and religious worth, prayed "that the representatives of the people should assemble in a *separate room* during the sitting of Conference; and that no new law should be enacted affecting the people, without their sanction," the propositions, based as they were on the plainest principles of right and expediency, and harmonizing, as they did, with every British feeling, and, as we shall see, with the principles of the New Testament, were rejected; and the Conference resolved, "That they cannot admit any but regular travelling preachers into their body, either in the Conference or District Meetings, and preserve the system of Methodism entire, particularly the itinerant plan, which they are determined to support."* And notwithstanding the experience of the New Connexion, and the Primitive Methodists, has *demonstrated* the fallacy of the principal reason assigned for the rejection of lay-representatives, yet, as though that was the *ostensible*, and not the real ground of rejection, your power since that period has been increased, and the liberties of your people have been narrowed. Now, Sir, a legislative body self-elected, and exclusive, and irresponsible, I denominate an oligarchy, and a despotism, whether it be found in civil or religious society; and if there is any proper application of those terms, they cannot, in my judgment, be more correctly applied.

In order to prevent all approaches on the part of your people to a citadel which you are determined to occupy alone, and, if we are to judge from late declarations, never to surrender, unless through famine, you inform your people, that they are "not to mend your rules, but to keep them for conscience' sake;"† and you enact, "Let no man, nor number of men in our Connexion, on any account or occasion, circulate letters, call meetings, do, or attempt to do, anything new till it has been first approved by Conference."‡ A specimen of legislation this, which mocks all the attempts made by *Castlereagh* to destroy the freedom of discussion, and roll back the tide of reform. First, the hands of your members are bound;—letters are not to be written and circulated. Secondly,

* Dr. Warren's Digest, Vol. I. p. 106. † Dr. Warren's Digest, Vol. I. p. 138.

‡ Large Minutes, 1794, p. 347.

silence is enjoined;—they are not to call meetings, and of course, not to speak at them: and then, though they cannot be deprived of active powers, the use of them is prohibited;—they are not to do, or to *attempt* to do anything new, until it be first approved by Conference. So then, though with the Rochdale local preachers and leaders, they may feel assured that some laws are indefinite—others are defective—and others are wrong—yet they are neither to write, nor speak, nor in any other way “to do, or attempt to do” anything to get the obscurity removed, or the imperfection supplied, or the wrong rectified, lest they should be told in the language of the reply to the application from Rochdale, that they are occupying their time on subjects “foreign from their proper business,” and indulging a spirit “altogether incompatible with genuine spiritual prosperity;” or lest they should be made to feel the power which the superintendent in such cases possesses of expelling them. Not only is your authority not to be touched, but even the *attempt* to touch it is a misdemeanor or a crime, and exposes to censure or excommunication. Such a law disgraces not the statute-book of any community in Christendom, except yours; and were any member of the British senate to propose an enactment even approaching to it, he would be denounced as a lunatic or an idiot, or would be suspected of some secret design to produce instant and universal rebellion. This law alone, Sir, by which your people are bound, and gagged, and laid prostrate at your feet, and forbidden even to *attempt* to write, or speak, or move, lest your quiet should be disturbed, and your authority endangered, would of itself justify stronger language than I have used, or shall at present use, in reference either to you, or your people, or your government.

The following extracts from an account of the trial and expulsion of a gentleman in Manchester, whose age, and piety, and long services, entitled him to the utmost forbearance and kindness, will strikingly illustrate some of your laws, and the spirit in which they are administered. The account was published by the gentleman himself, Mr. Greenhalgh, in the *Manchester Times* of the 6th inst., and has not, so far as I know, been disputed. Mr. G. observes, it “has been read to several of the leaders who were present on the memorable occasion, and who vouch for its correctness.”

“On Wednesday evening, November 12, in the Stewards’ room connected with Grosvenor-street Chapel, in the South Manchester Circuit, the trial took place. The Rev. J. Anderson commenced the proceedings by saying, ‘We are called together this evening on business of importance. I have, in discharge of my duty to God and to Methodism, required the brethren Greenhalgh, Hughes and Horsfield, to appear before us this evening, to answer certain charges with which I have furnished them. I will not appeal to your hearts or to your feelings, but to your reason; for I wish you to judge calmly and dispassionately. I wish also to say that I am forced to adopt this course. I am responsible to God for the faithful discharge of my official duties; and in the steps I shall take, I shall look to you for support. I have one or two prefatory remarks to make, to save interference afterwards. I cannot allow any brethren to cast reflections on my conduct, or in any way to criminate me. If I have broken any law I am responsible to another tribunal, and you have your redress; but I cannot suffer any reflections upon my proceedings here; neither can I allow the propriety or impropriety of establishing the Theological Institution to be here discussed: with that we have nothing to do, and I cannot allow remarks relative to that subject. Indeed we are not met for conversation or discussion, but to prove or disprove certain charges. The charges, then, which it is my painful duty to prefer against brother Greenhalgh are the following:—

“ 1 That you have written and published a pamphlet entitled, *An Address to the Members and Friends of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, relative to the Theological Institution, by a Wesleyan Methodist Local Preacher,—the principal object of which is to induce the persons therein addressed to suspend their Missionary efforts and liberalities, in order to compel the *immediate abandonment* of the said Theological Institution.*

“ 2. That the said pamphlet contains statements and reflections injurious to the character and usefulness of divers Wesleyan ministers and other persons therein alluded to.

“ 3. That at an illegal meeting held in David-street school room, in the first Manchester Circuit on Monday evening last, you advocated, and by your signature sanctioned, certain resolutions there proposed and adopted, which were and are anti-Methodistical, and which tend to disturb the peace and unity of the Wesleyan Societies.”

“ Mr. Anderson then said,—Is this a correct copy, Brother G.?—It is, Sir, was my reply.—Will you answer them one by one, or shall I go through the whole?—Just as you please, was my answer.—I refer the case to you, said he. Well then, said I, in order to save time, you had better go through the whole of the charges.—Mr. Anderson then read the first charge, and inquired, ‘ Did you write and publish this pamphlet?’ I did, Sir.—Then, said he to Brother Bedford, you may tell that person who was in waiting to prove this, to go.—Why really, Sir, said I, did you suppose I should deny this fact. I frankly confessed to you and Mr. Lusher, on Friday last, that I was the author, and it seems as though you doubted my frankness and honesty, in having a witness at hand.—He replied, its merely out of form. Well then, he continued, that being admitted, it follows as a matter of course, that whatever it contains is yours, and I now fix on certain passages to prove that Brother Greenhalgh has attempted to persuade the missionary collectors, subscribers, &c., to suspend their efforts and liberalities until the Theological Institution be abandoned, and that he has made statements and reflections injurious to the character and usefulness of certain Wesleyan ministers and others. Then turning to certain passages, he read, expounded, and applied, according to his own views. Then, said he, I have to shew that this tract and these passages are anti-Methodistical—I protested against such a step as illegal and disorderly, as I was not in these two counts in my indictment charged with any thing un-Methodistical. I said, What you are about to prove is not found in my first and second charges. The un-Methodistical character of my pamphlet is not once named, and I protest against the course you are pursuing as illegal.—With this objection he appeared hampered for a moment, and then proceeded:—The charges I have read, and if I prove your conduct as specified therein un-Methodistical, that is my point, and I will not be interrupted—you have the right to defend

* The importance of literary and intellectual acquirements to the Christian ministry, especially in the present state of society, must be seen by most persons acquainted with the nature and advantages of those acquirements, and the varied duties rightly devolving upon ministers of the Gospel. And it ought to be universally known, that the objections on the part of Dr. Warren, and the principal persons acting with him, are not so much against the employment of means to secure to pious and promising young men increased capabilities of usefulness, as against a separate establishment which should be used by a dominant party to increase its own power, by admitting and recommending only such ministers and missionaries as might be moulded according to its views and imbued with its spirit, and who would therefore assist in the more entire subversion of the liberties of the community. Till Dr. Warren saw, or thought he saw this to be the design, he voted for the institution, and even for the appointment of Dr. Bunting as its president. But when *that* conviction flashed upon his mind, *then*, and not till then, did he laudably stand forward as its opposer. Convinced, too, after what he had seen, that there was no alternative between an institution which should be thus subservient to party purposes, and no institution at all, he set himself to shew that it was not essential to the prosperity of the body; and that some at least, of the proposed advantages, might be secured without it. He may in some particulars have been incorrect in his views, or illogical in his reasonings, but that his *principles* and *general views* are right, every man of enlightened and liberal mind will allow. Such are the views embodied in the address by Mr. G., and to the *institution under this character*, he applied the terms set forth by Mr. Anderson in his support of the indictment; “ Bold and reckless,” &c. He therefore states, “ We protest against it as a serious innovation on Wesleyan Methodism; tending entirely to subvert its original constitution and design, and investing its officers, and especially its president, the Rev. Jabez Bunting, with an amount of power and authority, dangerous to the peace and prosperity of the connexion. These and such like, are our reasons for opposition to this bold and reckless measure; a measure which we believe, has been concocted and carried for party purposes; and which, unless we conscientiously and fearlessly do our duty, as Christians and Methodists, will ruin a system to which we are sacredly attached, and which we were fondly hoping, and ardently praying, would be transmitted in its native simplicity, and majesty, and power, to our children and children’s children, until all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

yourself afterwards, and you shall have all fairness. Well, then, I prove your conduct to be un-Methodistic by referring to page 326, in Large Minutes for 1794, 5 reg.: "To prevent as much as possible, the progress of strife and debate, and consequent divisions in our societies, no pamphlet or printed letter shall be circulated among us without the author's name and the postage or carriage paid." I prove it again by referring to page 347, question and answer 29. Question.—"What can be done to prevent unruly or unthinking men from disturbing our people?" Answer—Let no man, nor number of men in our Connexion, on any account or occasion circulate letters, call meetings, do or attempt to do any thing new till it has been first approved by Conference." Now, I infer from comparing Brother Greenhalgh's pamphlet with these regulations, he has been guilty of a gross dereliction of duty. Then appealing with his customary warmth to the brethren present he said, if he were aggrieved he should have applied to the Local Missionary Committees, or have waited until Conference, and memorialized. But here he takes advantage of the excited state of society, and publishes a pamphlet which tends to produce strife and division. Look at his language—"Daring and unconstitutional"—"bold and reckless"—"daring innovation"—"proud Goliah"—"monster", &c. Such language tends to excite the feelings and create the opposition of our societies. Besides, here is a gross misrepresentation. The Institution he calls a College—we denounce the name—and we might, knowing Brother Greenhalgh's good taste and discernment, expect better things. Then there is this strong expression;—"they see the difficulty themselves, but attempt to hide it from you lest you should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved from their dissimulation." Here Brother Cottom rose and said he wished to speak a word or two. "What about?" said Mr. Anderson. I wish to prove from the last number of our Magazine, that this charge of dissimulation is correct—I shall not hear you, said Mr. Anderson. I will hear no allegations against these men.—But I insist upon speaking as a member of this meeting. I will not allow you.—Then I say the conduct of those men is not distinguished by Christian uprightness and integrity, but that they are guilty of dissimulation. Now mind, vociferated Mr. Anderson, I give you notice, Brother Cottom, that you stand your trial next Wednesday evening. * * * He then sat down, having only gone through two charges, and desired me to reply, which I did as follows:—Sir, I admit my pamphlet was without name, but I was from the beginning known to be its author. I frankly confessed to every inquirer, and to yourself among others that I had written and published it and therefore the design of that regulation was not attempted to be defeated—the letter of the law only has been infringed—(Query, Does it not bear my official name)—but the intention and spirit of it have been observed. Then, again, the pamphlet, instead of creating strife and debate, had a tendency to abate it. You had set on foot the Institution un-Methodistically, and it is rending the Connexion in pieces.—I cannot allow that, said Mr. Anderson.—I replied, Sir, my defence is closely connected with it. You have joined the Missionary cause and the College, and how can I defend my conduct towards the former, without referring to the latter? Well, go on, go on, said he.—I say then, you, Sir, and the Conference, have created strife and division by breaking the laws of Methodism, the solemn compact entered into between preachers and people. And you, Sir, would not allow a constitutional expression of our sentiments, and we had no alternative left, but to appeal through the press to the Methodist public. I am not chargeable with the design to create strife and division: your conduct originated the pamphlet, and all its consequences are fairly chargeable on you. * * * I am not an unruly man; I have been in this society twenty-five years, have occupied most of that time in important offices, and I can appeal to the church and to the world, whether there be a blot upon my character; whether I have disgraced at any time my religious profession, or brought a disgrace upon the society from which you are about to expel me. No, thank God! I have maintained my integrity, and can say to my worst enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" I am not an unruly man, Sir; I am a peace-keeper and a peace-maker, but not a peace-breaker. Neither, Sir,—and I am obliged to say this, am I an unthinking man. Your frequent claims upon my services are the best proof of my assertion. * * * Mr. Anderson said, "Brethren, you perceive Brother Greenhalgh has failed to defend himself; he has attempted a defence, but it is fruitless; and now those who are of opinion Brother Greenhalgh has published this pamphlet, and that he has tried to persuade missionary friends and others to suspend their efforts and liberalities until the institution be abandoned, and that he has made

statements and reflections injurious to the character and usefulness of certain Wesleyan ministers and others: those who think these charges are proved, signify the same by a shew of hands:—"seven hands were held up and twenty were neuter.

"There is, said Mr. Anderson, another charge against Brother Greenhalgh: --- 'You are charged with attending an illegal meeting, and advocating, and by your signature sanctioning certain resolutions and propositions there adopted.' He then read the propositions and resolutions which were signed on Friday evening, the 7th Inst., by upwards of one hundred office-bearers in the First Manchester Circuit. After reading and dwelling largely on these, he went into some Minutes of Conference, with which not one in a hundred are acquainted, to prove the origin, the constitution, and the objects of this meeting to be unconstitutional. His plan appeared to be, first, to prove that there was no superintendent present: and here he contended Dr. Warren was not recognized as the superintendent of the First Manchester Circuit; and secondly, if he were, still we had no right there as the meeting was not held in our circuit; and thirdly, if the meeting were legal its doings were not, as a pledge was given to propositions and sentiments anti-Methodistical; and in my case an advocacy of such unconstitutional measures had been attempted, and I reported myself as the representative of many in our circuit.

"I replied, Sir, it is useless to say much, as my fate is already decided. I will say however, first, that Dr. Warren is the proper superintendent of the Manchester First Circuit, and that the meeting, therefore, was constitutional; and secondly, that the meeting was called by that circuit, and we who attended from other circuits are not responsible for its doings --- we were admitted to that meeting by the courtesies of our Christian brethren: and thirdly, that the pledge we gave was not to measures that were un-Methodistical, but, as far as I can judge, perfectly congenial with the constitution and usages of Methodism. I then read the resolutions, and shewed their agreement with Methodist law and usage, and defended the course I had adopted.

"Mr. Anderson said, Brethren, you have heard Mr. Greenhalgh's defence, which must be any thing but satisfactory to your minds; and now let those who think the case made out, that is, that Mr. Greenhalgh attended an illegal meeting, and there sanctioned its proceedings and these propositions and resolutions, signify the same by a show of hands. About six or seven hands were held up. Twenty-five persons were present at this stage of the proceedings, one having retired. Mr. G. Taylor alone held up his hand in opposition. The remainder were neutral. Then, said Mr. Anderson, before I proceed to the sentence, has brother Greenhalgh any thing to say? — I rose and said, I wish to state distinctly and deliberately, I wish you and this meeting fully to understand me, and I wish it to go forth to the public, that I do not retract one word of what I have published in that pamphlet; that I do not retrace one step I have taken relative to the public meeting and the resolutions and propositions there adopted; and let me also say distinctly and deliberately, and let it go forth to the world, that I am no recanter. — Then sitting down, Mr. Anderson rose and said, What I feared has come to pass, and it is now my solemn and painful duty to pronounce the sentence which Brother Greenhalgh has brought upon himself. (Here, it is but just to remark that at the suggestion of one or two brethren, Mr. Anderson proposed to defer my sentence a week; but several others, seeing that the case was decided, urged me to receive it then, to which I assented); and I now, said he, as in the presence of God, to whom I am accountable for my conduct, pronounce in the name of the Blessed Trinity --- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that Brother Greenhalgh is no longer a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society.' Mingled feelings of awe, regret, and indignation pervaded the meeting, and several brethren were affected to tears, and expressed their deep sorrow for my expulsion. I then rose, and being graciously supported by the presence of my God and my Saviour, said, Thank God you cannot rob me of my CHRIST --- you cannot deprive me of the comforts of religion. I feel this moment as much as ever I did in my life, that God is mine and I am his, and although you have dissevered me from one section of the church of God I can join another, and these are my supports and consolations in this grievous trial.

Thus, Sir, despotism immolates its victims: and having *obliged* pious and conscientious men to leave their quiet and obscurity to oppose its encroachments, it punishes their opposition as a crime, and, in the name of God, drives out from his churches the objects of his love!

But among the defences of your power, none is more exactly adapted

to its intended purpose, than the authority vested in your superintendent preachers, of presiding at all meetings, and of dissolving them by vacating the chair, whenever any subject is introduced which they deem "unmethodistical;" or in other words, whenever a proposition is submitted, opposed to their views, or likely to be ungrateful to the rulers of your Conference: after which dissolution, the meeting, if continued, becomes "illegal," or "a rebellion meeting;" and every person taking part in its proceedings renders himself liable, as in the case of Mr. Greenhalgh, to excommunication. The laws to which I chiefly refer are these:—

"As the Leaders' Meeting is the proper meeting for the society, and the Quarterly Meeting for the circuit, we think that other formal meetings, in general, would be contrary to the Methodist economy, and very prejudicial in their consequences: But,

"In order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our societies, we allow that other formal meetings may be held, if they first receive the approbation of the superintendent, and the Leaders' or Quarterly Meeting; provided also that the superintendent, if he please, be present at every such meeting."

"Let all the travelling preachers, where Sunday-schools are established, be members of the committees of those schools which belong to us; and let the superintendent preside in their meetings."

"We judge that if the superintendent of a circuit, or any of his colleagues, be obliged to withdraw from a Quarterly Meeting during its sittings, the meeting will be thereby dissolved; and we will receive no letters nor information from such meeting on any account."

"All rules are equally binding on both the preachers and the people: and therefore any superintendent who permits a vote to be taken on the execution or rejection of them, shall, on proof at the ensuing Conference, be deprived of the office of superintendent."*

Some of these laws, Sir, have a vagueness and generality which at first sight seem to leave but little to apprehend from their operation; but in fact these qualities better enable the hand of power to mould them into almost any form its purposes may require, and to render them the more effectual instrument of oppression. Instead of any commentary of mine, I will place before you some remarks by a respectable member of your own body, whose acquaintance with your laws and practice is extensive, and whose attachment to Wesleyan Methodism is sincere.

"I have long beheld with sorrow the disposition manifested by the travelling preachers, to prevent communication between the members of the Methodist societies, on many subjects deeply interesting to them. We have been warned both publicly and privately against the danger of illegal meetings, and gravely informed that nothing but anarchy, and injury to the work of God, both in the societies and in our own souls, can result from meetings in which no travelling preacher presides. We have been told that we have our regular meetings in which all matters connected with the society should be discussed, and that, if any real grievance should at any time exist, the Conference has its paternal ear ever open to our complaints, and is ever ready to redress the wrong; that every

* Dr. Warren's Digest, Vol. I. pp. 158, 231, 232, 397.

individual in the society has the right of appeal, and every circuit the privilege of addressing its humble petition to that august assembly.

“ Yet, of late, all meetings of whatsoever kind, to which a travelling preacher has not been invited, or which he may have refused to attend, have been branded illegal ; and the thunders of excommunication (happily harmless) have been hurled indiscriminately at all who have been bold enough to attend them, and to attempt a justification of their conduct. Thus, whatever the primary meaning of the law may be, the practice as exemplified in many recent cases proves, that the Conference preachers now *assume* the right to forbid any meeting of the officers and friends of the society for any purpose, unless the previous sanction of the superintendent of the circuit shall be obtained.

“ This sanction can never be obtained unless it is well known who are to compose the meeting, and that the object for which it is called is such as the superintendent, in the plenitude of his wisdom may deem serviceable to the interests of Methodism,—that is, to the increase of the authority of Conference. The law thus understood, becomes in fact a direct and positive prohibition of any extraordinary meeting whatever, in which the illegal conduct of the preachers in any particular circuit, or of the Conference, is to form the topic of discussion.

“ It is easy to foresee what effect this law thus explained must have on every thing which in the exercise of ‘ inherent rights,’ the preachers, or the Conference, may think proper to bring forward.

“ But should the case be one of self-evident injustice and manifest breach of law, (as in the late Leeds question) and should the complaints of the oppressed arouse the indignation of their brethren, insomuch that the majority of the official members of some circuit bring forward a remonstrance in their quarterly meeting, then the whole art of Jesuitism has been employed to prevent the expression of public disapprobation. But if, after all, the feeling could not be restrained, and a motion has been proposed on the subject, then the superintendent in the exercise of ‘ inherent rights,’ turns round upon the meeting, and refuses to put the motion.

“ But should a motion for an address be carried, (as in the case of the London South Circuit) and should that address be presented in the most respectful manner, with the utmost regularity, and in the precise form prescribed by the Conference itself, still nothing is gained ;—the Conference will not read any thing which censures its own conduct, nor can it acknowledge the possibility of doing wrong.

“ Thus, it appears, first, that no open and free discussion on any matter that involves the affairs over which Conference assumes authority, can be maintained where a travelling preacher is the president of the meeting ; and secondly, that no other meeting can, according to the present construction of the law, be legally held. Either the Society must tamely submit, or run at once into open rebellion, since the Conference assumes the right to make, alter and explain the Methodist law ; and in neither legal nor illegal meetings can any officer of the society offer an argument against its decisions with impunity. Wherein these assumptions, and the ‘ inherent rights’ claimed by Mr. Watson differ from Popery in its worst form, I am at a loss to discern.”

Such, Sir, are the sentiments of one who thinks highly of Methodism, and wishes to think so of Methodist Preachers. But as FACTS will best explain the meaning of the laws, at least as they are understood by those who both make and execute them, I will present you with a few out of a great number, which, if necessary, I can at any time supply. In order, likewise, to unfold *a little* of the jesuitical trickery, (no other term *justly* characterizes it) to which recourse is frequently had to preserve your power, and, either by deception or terror, to keep down the spirit of liberty, which, notwithstanding your fettering and gagging laws, will at times stir, and speak, and labour to cast off its chains,—I will give some of the cases in detail, with their attendant circumstances.

“For some considerable time after the dissensions at Leeds, the friends in Liverpool felt disposed to rely on the wisdom and justice of the Conference; and it was not until after the publication of their extraordinary minutes in 1828, that many of our friends became seriously alarmed at the spirit displayed by the Conference, and at their deliberate and uncompromising grasp at an authority totally subversive of the Methodist Constitution. They then felt it to be their duty to convey to the Conference their views relative to the whole of the proceedings so unhappily sanctioned in the minutes.

“When the address of the London South Circuit to the Conference of 1828, reviewing the case in a constitutional point of view, came into circulation, the conviction became more general and irresistible, that the preachers composing the special district meeting had violated their own laws; had unjustly expelled individuals from society, and had otherwise trampled upon the hitherto acknowledged rights and privileges of the local authorities. Yet the following Conference, in confirming these acts, declared them *constitutional* in Methodism. The question then very naturally suggested itself,—*What shall we do?*—Shall we continue to sit still, and for the sake of peace, or through the fear of causing strife and debate, pass over in silence such displays of arbitrary power and such flagrant violations of our ceded rights? or shall we in a mild and Christian, yet firm and decided manner, show to the Conference our strong disapprobation of these unhappy and unlawful proceedings? The latter alternative appeared to us the more righteous and becoming course; and, although truly painful to those who took the lead, yet they were encouraged to persevere by several whose piety and judgment they highly respected. They were still more particularly encouraged, by the announcement of the Conference of 1828, that its ‘PATERNAL EAR would be *always open* to any communications from the *quarterly meetings*.’

“The superintendent was accordingly informed, that several of the brethren conceived they had just cause of complaint in the violation of the constitution of Methodism, by the sanction thus given to the proceedings of the Leeds Special District Meeting: and that it was intended to introduce the subject at the *December quarterly meeting*, with the view of putting the Conference of 1829 in possession of their sentiments. The superintendent deprecated the introduction of such matters into the quarterly meetings, alleging that it might have a tendency to disturb and unsettle the minds of several individuals, who,

night, perhaps, but for the discussion, remain ignorant of the whole affair. To this it was replied, that if individuals were not permitted to deliver their sentiments, in the regular authorized meetings, they would in all probability be giving utterance to them elsewhere, which would have a much worse tendency. The interview ended in the mutual understanding, that the business should be brought forward at the quarterly meeting, and the superintendent concluded by saying, '*well then, I suppose we must meet the case.*' Anxious to proceed with the utmost candour and fairness, the superintendent was waited upon a fortnight prior to the quarterly meeting, with a copy of an address to Conference, intended to be proposed for the adoption of that meeting. On the perusal of this document, some objection was taken by him to the phraseology of a particular part, but no fault was found with its general spirit and tenor. The objectionable part of the address was afterwards altered, and it was again presented to the superintendent prior to the day appointed for the quarterly meeting.

"Immediately after the reading of the resolutions, the superintendent rose and said, 'he did not consider **THAT** meeting a *proper one* for the discussion of such matters: that *quarterly meetings* were simply for the transaction of business connected with the *immediate interests* of the *circuit*; that this was altogether an extraneous matter, and therefore could not be entertained; but, *as several of the brethren appeared to think they had cause of complaint*, he would call a **SPECIAL MEETING** of the preachers, trustees, stewards, leaders, and local preachers, *for the purpose of discussing the subject*; but at present he could suffer it to go no further.' The question was then asked, '*Will the proceedings and resolutions of such a meeting as you now propose to call, have all the weight and influence with the Conference, as if emanating from a regular quarterly meeting?*' This was answered in the *affirmative*, and the *time and place of meeting* was then *fixed upon*; viz., a fortnight from that period, in Brunswick Chapel vestry, at seven o'clock in the evening.

"At the time appointed, there was a full attendance of the preachers and local officers. The meeting having been opened by the superintendent, the foregoing resolutions were again proposed and seconded; and after two or three individuals, besides the mover and seconder had delivered their sentiments, the superintendent rose and addressd the meeting. He spoke almost entirely in reference to the **SOUTHWARK ADDRESS**! abstaining from any remarks upon the resolutions which were regularly before the meeting. He continued talking until nearly midnight, and concluded by saying, '*as to these resolutions, it will, I think, be clear from what I have said, THAT I CANNOT PUT THEM TO THE VOTE; not that I am afraid they would be carried, but because I cannot put any thing to the vote which I CONSIDER TO BE UNMETHODISTICAL.*' The meeting was thus broken up, the majority retiring with feelings of mortification and disgust at what they considered highly dishonourable and unchristian conduct."

Sir, if you can contemplate conduct like this, without the blush of shame spreading over your cheek, or indignation rising in your breast, I envy neither your feelings nor your moral principles. Such conduct

is an outrage on every feeling, that either British views of liberty, or Christian views of rectitude must inspire; and the system requiring such supports, must have in it something very different from righteousness.

The parties thus insulted, proceeded patiently to represent their sentiments to your Conference; and, in the fond hope of obtaining justice there, they, in the mildest and most respectful manner, stated the course pursued by their superintendent. The following is the result: —

“On the return of the preachers from Conference a written answer was fully expected, addressed to the brethren who, as the organ of communication, had forwarded the memorial to the president. Instead of receiving such an answer, however, it was intimated, as from the superintendent, that no written answer had been returned by the Conference, but that an oral communication on the subject would be made by the secretary of the Conference at the *September Quarterly Meeting*, and it was given as a reason, that it was never the practice of Conference to give WRITTEN replies to any memorials which did not come to them through THE CHANNEL OF A REGULAR QUARTERLY MEETING!

“This consisted admirably with the avowal made at the December quarterly meeting, namely, ‘that the *quarterly meeting was not the regular channel*.’ But, as it was understood that the secretary of Conference was in possession of some sort of reply, written or oral, one of the brethren took an early opportunity of putting the question to him to ascertain the fact. To this inquiry it was replied, that the answer was a written one, signed by the president and one of the subsecretaries, and that it would be delivered at the September *quarterly meeting*. It was then observed, that as the resolutions were *not allowed to be discussed* in the previous *quarterly meeting*, as being altogether unconnected with the *regular and legitimate business of that meeting*, there could be no propriety whatever in delivering the *answer* to such a meeting. To this it was simply said, ‘I must abide by my instructions.’

“The greater part of the brethren who had signed the resolutions, absented themselves from the Quarterly Meeting, conceiving it to be neither right nor proper, that the answer to their communication should be given at a meeting in which the superintendent had declared that subject could not be discussed. But an early opportunity was taken by the brethren, who had forwarded the address to Conference, to wait upon the secretary for the purpose of ascertaining from him, the precise nature of the answer returned. They requested to be favoured with a perusal of the document, as well for their own satisfaction, as for that of the other memorialists. The answer was, that he could have ‘no objection to state the substance of the reply, which contained only a few words, but as to the *document itself*, it was merely a *private communication* addressed to himself, and which he had either *mis laid or destroyed*! it was however to the following effect, viz. that he was to state to the quarterly meeting, that the Conference had received the address sent from this circuit, and *very highly approved of the conduct of the superintendent in steadily resisting any discussions connected with the vital interests of Methodism, and that his refusal to put to the vote such resolutions was exceedingly praiseworthy*;’ and it concluded by a reference to an article in the Minutes, as containing, it was presumed, a sufficient answer to all our objections.”

Such is the GOVERNMENT of Wesleyan Methodism! And almost every circuit can testify that this is not a solitary case. Yet the defects complained of, are only “theoretic,” and even these have yet to be “*proved!*” Sir, the injured, and maligned, and persecuted Kilham once exclaimed, amidst the misrepresentations and wrongs he had to suffer,—“O Justice! whither art thou fled!” And may I not, after the specimens thus furnished, utter the same exclamation with respect to TRUTH?

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

T. ALLIN.

Sheffield, December 24th, 1834.

LETTER IV.

REV. SIR, in order to meet your statements, that the alleged defects of the Wesleyan government are “theoretical” merely, and that with respect even to these, “their existence has yet to be *proved*,”—and at the same time, to shew that the representations of your government given in my address to the Delegates, are neither the errors of ignorance, nor the misrepresentations of malignity, as you and your worthy associates would lead the uninquiring to suppose, but sober truths, which, however they may be denied, can never be disproved, I gave, in my last, a general view of your Conference, as composed exclusively of one particular class of officers, the circuit preachers;—and noticed its uncontrolled and irresponsible legislative authority;—the jealousy with which it views any attempt on the part of any other class of persons to interfere with that authority;—and the means it employs to preclude such interference, by preventing or restricting discussion, and by making its agents, the superintendents, masters in every meeting in which either the authority or the acts of Conference can “legally” be brought under review; investing them with power to refuse to put any thing to the vote considered by them to be “unmethodistical;” and to dissolve the meeting, by vacating the chair, should a motion be pressed in opposition to their will.* Now, Sir, a government so constituted, try as you may to disguise it, *is an oligarchy*; and power so absolute and irresponsible is *despotic*. To whatever extent, therefore, an oligarchical despotism,

* The following case is so strikingly illustrative of the perfect despotism of the Wesleyan government, that it cannot be too generally known. At the quarterly meeting of the Bramley Circuit, held on Monday December 22nd, it was resolved to discuss the subjects which now agitate the Wesleyan community; when, as the superintendent was prevented from attending, by indisposition, “before the subjects were formally introduced, a deputation was appointed to wait upon him in his room, to inform him of the nature of the business about to be discussed, and ascertain if, in his opinion, resolutions which might be agreed to by the meeting in his unavoidable absence, would have the same weight and influence with the Conference, as if he had been present. To which he replied, no! and then besought them to desist from their purpose; but added, if they had any grievances to complain of, they might in their separate and individual capacities, address the Conference upon them! The deputation very naturally, and with astonishment and indignation, then inquired, are all the official persons in the Bramley Circuit, separately to address the Conference, on subjects which they feel to be common grievances? The answer was, Yes! The result of this unsatisfactory interview was then communicated to the meeting, which, as may well be conceived, produced a very strong sensation. After some discussion, the deputation, was again sent to Mr. Eastwood, to urge upon him the unreasonableness of his accidental absence preventing them from going through their business in the regular Quarterly Meeting, especially as his colleague was in the Chair. Being closely pressed upon this point, and apparently unable satisfactorily to answer the arguments, he then put into their hands a letter, signed ‘Joseph Taylor, President,’ in which he was positively directed, in case any attempt should be made to introduce into any of the official meetings, a discussion upon the disputed topics now agitating the Connexion, *by all means to repress it*; and that if it could not be otherwise effected, he was to leave the chair, declare the meeting dissolved, AND THUS PREVENT ANY THING IN THE SHAPE OF COMPLAINT, PASSING THROUGH THE REGULARLY CONSTITUTED MEETINGS, TO THE NEXT CONFERENCE.”

as a form of government, is defective, the government of Wesleyan Methodism is so; and had we none of its acts by which to judge, it would be consistent with charity to infer that a theory so defective would produce, as its natural result, an erroneous practice; and that such a government would gradually exhibit all the *vices* of an oligarchy.

We are not left, however, to mere inferences which reason may draw, from defects in theories and forms, to corresponding practical results; we have facts in abundance, now accumulating with a frightful rapidity; and which shew to all who are not wilfully or judicially blinded, that the *acts* of your government are as oppressive, as its form is defective, and its principles are despotic. And the man who, with a knowledge of those facts, can coolly publish to the world, that the defects with which your government is charged are merely theoretic, and have yet to be proved, may talk of charity as long, and as loudly as he pleases, but he knows as little of *christian* charity as he does of *true* liberty; and has still to "go and learn what that meaneth," *Charity—rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in THE TRUTH.*

Already have we seen proofs of a determination on the part of your government to have all classes of the community in a state of absolute, unresisting subjection to itself:—or in plain terms, to have all other officers as well as members the tame slaves of the *circuit preachers*; having no liberty, but either implicitly to obey them, as the representatives and agents of that supreme and awful authority, the Conference, or to leave churches partially, perhaps chiefly raised by their labours, and which their *christian* graces had pre-eminently adorned. But, Sir, we have not yet seen the whole extent of your claims. Not content to allow the pious and intelligent managers of your Sabbath Schools the liberty enjoyed by them during the life of the venerable founder of Methodism, nor even to permit the continuance of regulations that had his approval, you first draw up a code of laws which, to the schools previously established, are presented under the form of recommendations, and then you direct or sanction the most wanton exercise of power, in *constraining* the managers of those institutions to subject them to your direct, and almost absolute control. Passing over your contrivances and contentions in the cases of Bolton Sunday school, in Lancashire; of Burslem, in the Staffordshire Potteries; and of Red-Hill and Spring-street schools, in this town, let me crave the attention of yourself and the public to the following epitome of outrages and wrongs, as detailed in a letter addressed to Dr. Townley, the president of your preceding Conference, and which can at any time be satisfactorily verified.

"The subject of dispute has been the Chester Methodist Sunday-schools. The John-street school was one of the first institutions of the kind established in the kingdom, and for more than forty years was governed by rules and regulations adopted by the teachers and other friends, the Methodist preachers during that time never having assumed any control over its management. In 1826, however, the Conference, deemed it proper to interfere with the schools, and drew up a number of rules and recommendations for their government, which were confirmed by that body the following year. Among these rules, fifteen in number, there were several which proposed some alterations in relation to these seminaries; first, that all the circuit preachers should be members of the committee of management, and that the super-

intendent preacher should always preside; second, that writing on the Sabbath-day should be discontinued; and third, that the children should be brought to the public worship at least once on the Lord's day. To these regulations I see nothing to object, nor did the conductors of the Chester schools hesitate in their adoption; they all stood as a part of their internal economy in their printed rules.

"There is yet one other rule, or rather recommendation, in the new code adopted by Conference, the intemperate enforcement of which by the superintendent, has been the immediate cause of the late dissensions and division. This regulation goes to the reorganization of the committee, of course by the superintendent preacher, into which body only *one-fourth* of the teachers were to be admitted; the remaining *three-fourths* being composed of persons who probably never put their foot into a Methodist Sunday-school, and who are not likely to feel any very strong interest in its prosperity. This arrangement was resisted by the conductors of the school; and, I ask, Sir, in the name of candour and good feeling, if they were not justified in this resistance, whether we consider the proposition on the ground of *reason* or *justice*? Was it reasonable to expect, that persons, who had been gratuitously devoting the labour of years to the interests of the rising generation, would quietly and tamely submit to be rudely driven from a management, in which their labours had been sanctioned by the blessing of Divine Providence, and approved by their friends and brethren around them.

"The rules or recommendations to which I have already adverted, will be found in the Minutes of Conference of 1827, page 81-88. They are there recited at large, as the report of a committee previously appointed: then follow five resolutions of Conference, which decidedly and specifically fix their application, the fourth and fifth of which are as follow:—‘4. That all NEW Sunday Schools, which may HEREAFTER be established in our connexion, and which shall have the support and sanction of our preachers, or the aid of regular collections in our chapels, shall be established in conformity to the principles now explicitly adopted by the Conference, and that the rules and *recommendations* hereinbefore contained, &c., &c., shall be considered as the outline of that approved and authorized system, by which all NEW institutions among us are to be governed.’

“5. That the Conference also deems it right and expedient, not to withhold the affectionate expression of their most earnest *hope* and *expectation*, that the managers of those Sunday schools *already existing*, which claim any relation to Methodism, and are carried on by the labours and the influence of our people, or supported in part by collections made in our chapels, (if they have not fully done it already) will be induced to adopt *as soon as possible* the same leading principles, and to walk by the same general rules.’—As to the ‘leading principles’ and ‘general rules,’ here recommended by Conference, they have been adopted and acted upon by the John-street teachers; and if in any thing the latter have deviated, it has only been in this single point, that they have differed from the *opinion* of Conference, and preferred their present mode of forming their committee to that *advised* by the former. But there has been no breach of Methodist law.

In 1825-26, Mr. Wm. Smith was the superintendent who, during his second year, with much more zeal than discretion, laboured to model the committees of the schools in accordance with the Conference recommendation. His extreme violence was quite sufficient to defeat his object; and even the worthy men in the society, who always feel it to be their Christian duty to support the priesthood, compelled him to desist for fear of mischief. In 1827-28, Mr. Hinson laboured in the circuit. Whether from a reverence to the infallibility of Conference, or from the convictions of his own mind, I know not, but he pressed, though with great Christian temper, the same object. Having, however, ascertained that it could not be accomplished without a serious breach in the society, and knowing, also, that the point was left to the discretion of the teachers, like a minister of God, and a man of peace, he desisted from the attempt, and left the city and circuit with credit to himself, and with the regrets of thousands. The Conference of 1828, brought Mr. Jackson and Mr. Rayner to Chester. They found a peaceful, undisturbed and prosperous society, cordially disposed and able to meet its local demands, and aid the external calls of the connexion. All this was excellent, and might be thought amply sufficient to meet the expectations, and even the wishes of the body. But no. There was yet a want of reverence in the teachers of the Sunday-schools. ‘All this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King's gate.’ On Mr. Jackson's return the second year, he com-

menced the work of coercion in good earnest. He gave the interpretation of *law* to the *recommendation* of Conference, and urged as a justification of what he intended to do, and afterwards of what he had done, the severe rebukes he had received from his assembled brethren, for not having brought the refractory teachers into subjection the preceding year.

"At the time of Mr. Jackson's superintendency, there were three Sabbath schools in Chester: one in John-street, adjoining the chapel; another in Handbridge; and a third in Brook-street. The first was rented of the chapel trustees by Mr. Geo. Lowe, goldsmith, who was treasurer, and two of his sons superintendents; the second was built chiefly through that gentleman's exertions, and those of his family, by *private* subscriptions, and were both conducted on Methodist principles, and by members of the society. The latter was also erected by subscription, the ground and a handsome sum of money being given by a gentleman, not a member of the society, who is pre-eminently distinguished for benevolence and liberality. It should be noted, that the school in Brook-street was projected and built, and subscriptions solicited and given, not as for a *Methodist* Sunday school, but as one for children of *all denominations*. I have now before me a printed address, signed by Mr. Thomas Bowers, the superintendent of the school, in which it is *so denominated*. The trust deed of the building was made in accordance with this professed object, and amongst others, Mr. Lowe was a trustee. Shortly after the return of Mr. Jackson from Conference in 1829, he seems to have determined upon an entire revolution in the schools.

"The trust-deed for Brook-street school was of a description he disapproved; the preachers were no parties in it, and consequently had no control over the teachers, or in its management. This was a circumstance exceedingly offensive to Mr. Jackson, who urged the necessity of making a new deed upon what is called the *Conference plan*, that is, giving to the preachers a property in the building, but *without responsibility*, and a power to govern at their pleasure. Although the money had been collected under a perfect understanding that the school should not be subject to extrinsic authority, and the deed drawn up in conformity with this view, yet, strange to say, all the trustees, except Mr. Lowe, were induced to yield to Mr. Jackson's persuasion, and consent to his wishes. Mr. Lowe, however, resisted the innovation; and this, with what remains to be told, is quite sufficient to account for that hostility manifested by the preachers towards him and his family. The Handbridge school had been settled upon a similar foundation; and the trustees unanimously determined that it should so remain, notwithstanding the urgency of Mr. Jackson for its reconstruction. The school of John-street was included in the chapel trust, placed at the disposal of the Conference and therefore liable to that disgraceful violence which followed.

"Towards the close of the last year, 1829, Mr. Jackson insisted upon a *new committee* for the government of the schools, and he appointed one. His duty imposed no such necessity; and a feeling of regard to the interests of the society forbade it. He was apprized of the injury that would follow, by several of the judicious leaders; but this was met with an assurance, that he had the concurrence of Mr. Robert Newton, Mr. Jabez Bunting, Mr. Watson, and several others of the influential preachers, in his purpose. With such support what had our worthy superintendent to fear, as it regarded the censure of Conference? Nothing at all. It is well known, that these *excellent* men rule and *over-rule* all its decisions. The teachers of the schools, however, being bound by no Methodistical law, refused to acknowledge the authority of Mr. Jackson's new-formed committee, and never condescended to amalgamate themselves with any of their proceedings. The management of the schools, the moral characters of the teachers, and their conformity to Methodist discipline, were insufficient to form any pretence for breaking them up. But in the close of the last year, an incident occurred, most opportune for those who watched for an opportunity of annoyance. A number of young men, leading characters in the congregations of the city, associated together for the purpose of qualifying themselves for assisting at a performance of the anniversaries of their respective chapels. What could be thought more harmless, or rather, what more commendable? But no; — our worthy superintendent designated their meeting on the evening of Christmas day, for a rehearsal, as a gross violation of morality, and what was still more serious, an infraction of Methodist law. A meeting of the local preachers was instantly summoned, in which the eloquence of Mr. Jackson was successfully employed in passing a resolution, that *the preaching should be withdrawn from Handbridge*, a populous suburb of the city. This is a curious analogy, when taken in connexion with the fact, that within a few days of this transaction a

Methodist choral meeting was held in Macclesfield, to which admission was given by tickets only at a high rate, and which was sanctioned by the *approbation* and the *presence* of the *preachers*.

"The exclusion of the Sunday preaching from Handbridge was followed by a resolution of Mr. Jackson's new-modelled committee, that no part of the produce of the annual collection should be allowed to John-street or Handbridge schools; though for the former a rent of eight pounds a year was paid, and for the latter the interest of debt amounted nearly to an equal sum. It should likewise be noted, that the whole debt upon the Brook-street school had been liquidated by public generosity, partly, or perhaps principally, from the *supposed* liberality of its foundation; and yet to this school, so much inferior in its claims, the yearly collection was to be confined. Mr. Jackson convened a meeting of the trustees of John-street chapel, to enforce his demand for the authority of his new-formed committee. Yes, and this body concurred with the superintendent, with only two dissentients. This fact certainly speaks favourably to the proceedings of the preachers, and should have great weight, until this circumstance be told, that these trustees had been *nominated* and *appointed* by Mr. Jackson himself, with a view of carrying his favourite points. Let it also be added, that to this meeting Mr. R. Newton, of Liverpool, was invited, who attended, and lent his powerful eloquence to show that the insubordination of Mr. Lowe and his sons must be conquered. At this memorable assembly, it was determined that the Conference *recommendation* was Methodist law; that the old superintendents and teachers of the school should be expelled, and that new ones, formed according to Mr. Jackson's own heart, should be appointed. This meeting was held on the Friday evening, and on the next night, a little before midnight, locksmiths were in operation, the locks taken off, new ones put on, and on the Sabbath morning, the Rev. Mr. Jackson, the new treasurer, Mr. Guest, and two or three fresh superintendents, long before school-hours, had taken possession of the school. I would spare Christian feeling, in detailing what followed, when the old superintendents and teachers arrived; it is enough to say that the children rejected their new visitors, and with one voice declared their attachment to the men, who for years had taught them in the way of truth. I do not know whether it is a subject to be regretted, but the fact is that on the conclusion of the Sabbath school service, the building was again taken possession of by Mr. Jackson's adherents. On the morning of Monday, carpenters and bricklayers were busily engaged in bricking up the door-posts and barricading the windows; and for about a fortnight, bludgeon-men were employed in resisting a forcible entrance.

"I am quite certain, that Mr. Lowe would have been legally justified in making a forcible entrance, and such was the decided opinion of his legal adviser; but surely enough had been done, to bring Methodism into disgrace; and besides, it was hardly likely that Mr. Lowe would hazard a protracted litigation with a powerful body of men, with whom money was of no more value than its mere collection, and especially after the admonitory caution addressed to Mr. Lowe's family by Mr. Rayner,— 'What, are you able to sustain a law-suit with the Conference ?'

"The plea of our worthy superintendent and his colleague has ever been, that Mr. Lowe and his sons were no Methodists; and their justification of this assertion has been, first, their refusal to sign a new trust for Brook-street, contrary to its professed design; and secondly, an objection to the nature of the committee recommended by the Conference. This, Sir, is the whole amount of their offence, and I believe all that is imputed to them. And yet for this they have been turned out of John-street, and the preaching excluded from Handbridge.

"It will very naturally be inquired, from whence has arisen this commotion,— these scenes of violence, in which Methodists and Methodist preachers are the actors? Is it because some gross dereliction of duty has been discovered in the conductors of St. John's-street school? No. Not a word of complaint has been urged against the morals or against the management of the individuals connected with this school. The character of these men would be an ample refutation of such a charge. Mr. George Lowe, who has been a nursing father to this school for more than forty years, and whose piety and integrity have ever been unimpeachable, is the treasurer; two of his sons, who have for years devoted the whole of their Sabbaths, and two evenings in every week, in promoting the instruction of the children, the superintendents; while another son and daughter are active and efficient teachers, and who are all, and have been for years, members of the Methodist society. All the other persons employed in the school are also either members of the society, or of unblemished moral character.

Has the relentless spirit of persecution been excited from improper officers or individuals having direction of the institution? No. All the officers and teachers are of the class already described, and besides, their visitors are uniformly selected from the Methodist leaders. Has any attempt been made at innovation, or has any disposition been shown to usurp authority over the superintendent, or other preacher? Certainly not. The conductors only wish to be governed by those laws by which the school has been generally regulated for nearly fifty years; and by the present rules, the superintendent preacher is appointed to preside at all their meetings. But, have no books of instruction inimical to the doctrines of Christianity or of Methodism, been introduced openly or insidiously? Nothing of the kind. No books have ever been used in the school but the Bible and Testament, and elementary books, printed or sanctioned by the Methodist Conference. To come still nearer to the point, it may be asked have not the conductors of the schools violated some acknowledged law of Conference? I answer, *emphatically*, and *decidedly*, NO!—NO!—Not an iota of law, in the letter, or in the spirit, has been broken. I challenge, I invite, a disproval of this assertion. In the mean time, I take leave to say, that the sole cause of the outrages already enumerated, arises from the disappointed ambition of the superintendent preacher, who violently attempted to *enforce* a point, which the Conference only *recommended*. He *insisted* upon his right of nominating the governors of the school; the conductors have *resisted* his pretensions. Here is the ‘head and front of their offending.’ Let the Methodist, let the English, and especially, let the Chester public judge, between the oppressed and the oppressors, the persecuted and the persecutors.”

It is easy to say, Sir, what judgment “the English and the Chester public” must pronounce on conduct like this. They must see a determination, strongly marked, on the part of Conference, to bring the Sunday schools, considered as property, and all the managers of them, under its direct control, by putting all real authority into the hands of its agents, the superintendents;—placing them in the chairs at all meetings, invested of course, with the plenitude of Wesleyan Methodistic power to disallow or permit discussion, or to continue or dissolve the meetings at their pleasure;—making superintendents and committees of schools their mere nominees, and teachers, monitors, &c., their vassals. In all this, an observant public must see one of the most characteristic and revolting features of priesthood—viz., a grasping ambition, which recognizes no rights as existing in any class of persons, except the absolute right of the priesthood to legislate and coerce; and which, blinding the minds and hardening the hearts of its votaries, prepares them, under the imposing names of church-order, and pastoral rule, to perpetrate deeds at which an honest heathen would blush; and to insult, and injure, and drive from the church of Christ, men who ranked among its brightest ornaments, and its most illustrious benefactors.

The same authority is extended to your Missionary institutions; and gradually are you trying to bring all your trust-estates into the same absolute subjection to it. In fact, scarcely any thing connected with a Wesleyan Chapel or society, be its character and professed object ever so general, but must be rendered sectarian, by its subjection to the authority of Conference, through the medium of the superintendent preachers. The history of some cases of this class would present lamentable instances of the most glaring violation of public faith, and of the sacrifice of every honourable principle on the altar of an unholy ambition. But those I at present pass over, as I *must* notice that important branch of your system relating to the appointment and removal of the officers of your churches, and the admission and expulsion of members. The power claimed and exercised by your preachers in these matters, became, soon

after the death of Mr. Wesley, a source of deep dissatisfaction, and a subject of loud complaint. For though, as was stated by the complainants, some preachers, deeply imbued with the spirit of their master, consulted their people, and acted only with the concurrence of the respective meetings, others, possessing more of the pride of power than of the humility of the gospel, could not stoop to take the judgment of those over whom they swayed the sceptre of authority, but at their own will admitted members or excluded them, and appointed officers or set them aside. The celebrated charter of 1795 was therefore granted, with its subsequent regulations; and which some of your people, in the simplicity of their hearts, thought had fully secured to them the rights for which they had so strenuously contended. Glad, Sir, should I be, could I bring myself to believe that the individuals by whom those documents were drawn up were actuated by the same unmixed godly sincerity. But though much was conceded in appearance and profession, yet the "chartered rights" were few; and there is too much cause to fear, that under an ambiguous phraseology, a meaning was couched, different from that intended to be understood; while the people were designedly lulled by the supposition that power was given up which was only in abeyance, until a fit time should arrive for taking off the veil, and resuming that which was supposed to have been permanently surrendered. To this conclusion I seem inevitably driven, whether I examine the "charter" itself, or the following statement of the inherent rights of Conference, as avowed by Mr. Mather and his coadjutors, in 1796.

They say, "We are of one mind as to the power vested in Conference; and we approve of the account given of that power in the Manchester protest, viz. "The power of Conference is neither usurped, nor wholly delegated by men, but first is given to them by God, in common with all who are by him called to the work of the ministry, Acts xx. 28. 1 Thes. v. 12, 13. 1 Tim. v. 17, 19. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. 1 Peter i. 5. Secondly, it is a power inherent in themselves, as ministers who have formed themselves into a body, and made out rules as they judged proper for the government and direction of that body, and all who might desire to unite with them, both as preachers and people; which must consequently imply a power of judging with whom they will and will not hold this fellowship, viz. such as are subject to these rules, and so long as they are so."

It is impossible not to perceive that the holders of such a doctrine would concede as few as possible of those rights which they believed they held from God, and which, therefore, unless so far as they were impelled by dire necessity, they could not conscientiously relinquish. Those few would also be surrendered as defectively as possible, and with every conceivable limitation: while the way would be left open to resume them at some future favourable opportunity. Such, I fear, were the views of the ruling party in Conference, which then, as now, numbered but comparatively few. Let us, however, look both at the grants themselves and the language of Conference respecting them.

In respect to the receiving and excluding private members of the Society: "The Leaders' meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial, improper to be received into the Society: and, after such declaration, the Superintendent shall not admit such person into the Society. No person shall be expelled from the Society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a Leaders' Meeting.

In respect to the appointment and removal of Leaders, Stewards, and Local Preachers:—

"No person shall be appointed a Leader or Steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders' Meeting: the nomination to be in the Superintendent, and the approbation or disapprobation in the Leaders' Meeting.—The former Rule concerning Local Preachers is confirmed: viz., That no person shall receive a plan as a Local Preacher, without the approbation of a Local Preachers' Meeting.

"Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public Meetings.—Our Societies have a full check on the Superintendent, by means of their Leaders' meeting, in regard to the introduction of persons into Society; whilst the Superintendent has sufficient scope allowed him for the increase of the Societies, not only according to the common course of things, but at the times of remarkable out-pourings of the Spirit of God.—The Members of our Societies are delivered from every apprehension of clandestine expulsions; as *that* Superintendent would be bold indeed, who would act with partiality or injustice in the presence of the whole Meeting of Leaders. Such a Superintendent, we trust, we have not among us; and if such there ever should be, we should be ready to do all possible justice to our injured brethren.—There is now no Society-Officer among us, who can be received without the consent of that Meeting to which he particularly belongs: nor can any officer be appointed, except upon the same plan.—In short, Brethren, out of our great love for peace and union, and our great desire to satisfy your minds, we have given up to you far the greatest part of the Superintendent's authority."—*Dr. Warren's Digest, Vol. I. pp. 238, 233, 235.*

Your people, Sir, were here told, that "the greatest part of the executive government" and of "the superintendents' authority" was given into their hands. And they generally supposed, that, according to these regulations, no preacher could either admit, or expel a member, without the *consent* of a majority of a leaders' meeting; and that neither local preacher, nor leader, nor steward, could either be admitted without the approbation of the meeting of which he was to form a part, or removed from it, unless in the judgment of such meeting the matter with which he stood charged was both proved against him, and merited such a punishment. So much, they thought, was involved in the protective clauses,—"proved at a leaders' meeting"—and, "in conjunction with the leaders' meeting": more especially when these were among the privileges for which they had strenuously contended, and in reference to which they were told,—"Out of our great love for peace and union, and our great desire to satisfy your minds, we have given up to you BY FAR THE GREATEST PART of the superintendents' authority." Such, I believe, was the view entertained by Dr. Clarke, and by those preachers, who, like him, were too noble-minded to stoop to the adoption of a crooked policy to serve a temporary purpose. And for some time, the meetings seem to have been permitted to exercise these prerogatives, without any direct interruption. On close examination, however, it will be found that *the only right distinctly recognized*, as existing in the meetings, is a simple veto on the admission of any member or officer whom the superintendent might propose. With him was still left the exclusive nomination of leaders, stewards, &c.; and in cases of *removal* from membership or office, the laws are either entirely silent, or their language is much less precise. A charge against a member must "be proved at a leaders' meeting;" and though among single-minded men, there would be little room to dispute the meaning of such an expression, yet in some of your courts, and by some of your lawauthorities it has been interpreted to mean—*in the presence* of the leaders—not to their satisfaction, but to the satisfaction of the Superintendent. And, Sir, though this is a construction which the most

unprincipled lawyer in the kingdom would scarcely venture to propose to the most ignorant or unprincipled jury to be found in any British court of judicature, yet it seems to be supported by the following singular enactment :

“ No Trustee, however accused, or defective in conformity to the established Rules of the Society, shall be removed from the Society, unless his crime or breach of the Rules of the Society be proved, in the presence of the Trustees and Leaders. 1794.” See Digest p. 281.

The strangeness of this language, considered as the language of legislation, clearly points out the singularity of its meaning ; and leaves no room to doubt that the intention of the legislators was to vest *the right of judgment* in some other party than the trustees and leaders, leaving them merely as witnesses, or, should they deem it right to be so, as approvers. Thus the superintendent might allow himself to be influenced by their presence and views, but was not bound by their judgment. And if the same principle be not involved in the following statement, I am utterly at a loss how it is to be understood :

“ The Members of our Societies are delivered from every apprehension of clandestine expulsions; as *that* Superintendent would be bold indeed, who would act with partiality or injustice in the presence of the whole Meeting of Leaders.”—Dr. WARREN’S DIGEST. p. 234.

This declaration professedly refers to the stipulation, that immorality is to be “ proved *at* a leaders’ meeting.” In this declaration, however, though it is sufficiently lengthy, not an expression occurs to indicate, either that the *right of judgment* is vested in the leaders’ meeting—or that the superintendent is bound by their views—or that, should he give sentence in opposition to their judgment, any *law* is violated, and such sentence shall be void. He is, indeed, supposed to be awed by their presence, or, it may be, influenced by their opinions ; but **THIS IS ALL.** “ That superintendent would be bold indeed, who would act with partiality or injustice *in the presence* of the whole meeting of leaders.” And though the announcement is formally made, that the “ societies have a full check on the superintendent by means of their leaders’ meeting, in regard to the *introduction* of persons into society ;” yet not a word occurs respecting such a check on their *expulsion*. Such are some of the *rights* secured by your boasted MAGNA CHARTA; and I fear I may add, such were the deceptions practised on your people by their legislators, in order to allay excitement by a shew of liberty, until a fit opportunity should arrive of taking away that liberty, under the sanction of the very laws by which it was supposed to have been given.

In relation to leaders and stewards the language employed is somewhat less indefinite. They are not to be removed from office, except “*in conjunction with the leaders’ meeting.*” But it is easy to see, that by a very trifling extension of the same quibbling, which proves that “*at a leaders’ meeting,*” does not mean—to the *satisfaction* of that meeting, it may be shewn, that—“*in conjunction,*” does not imply concurrence, but connexion ; or, as in the former case, “*in the presence*” of the meeting. To my mind, too, it seems an ominous circumstance, that though with respect to “*the nomination*” of a leader or steward, it is expressly provided, that “*the approbation or disapprobation*” shall be “*in the leaders’ meeting,*” yet in reference to removal, *there is no*

such stipulation; and though the people are afterwards informed, "There is now no society-officer among us, who can be received without the consent of that meeting to which he particularly belongs; nor can any officer be appointed except upon the same plan," yet on the subject of removal from office the most profound silence is preserved! So far, Sir, from viewing this as unintentional, I consider it to be the natural, or necessary result of the doctrine of "inherent rights," and correspondent exclusive responsibilities, as held by some of the then rulers in Israel, as well as by those who at present rule. And, indeed, to the consistent maintainence of those rights, *much more* than this is necessary. But on this subject I shall say more hereafter.

The concessions, some of which were, in law, apparent only, though real in practice, produced, to a considerable extent, their intended effect. Excitement was allayed; jealousies were lulled; and, notwithstanding occasional discontents, general peace and confidence and prosperity prevailed. But the eye of certain parties in Conference was steadily kept on the diminished prerogative, and a purpose was formed to obtain its resumption. The first general step towards this object, of which the public have any information, was thus announced in 1825, by Mr. Robinson, of Beverly, whose testimony is, I believe, unrefuted and irrefutable.

"If there could remain a doubt respecting the absolute and uncontrollable power of a superintendent, I would cite the testimony of a very competent witness—Mr. Galland, the Beverly superintendent—who informed Mr. Anthony Atkinson, Mr. J. Shepherd, and myself, when he met us to refute the truth of my "Observations," that he heard the question discussed in Conference, whether or not a superintendent should have the power to dismiss from the society any member, leader, steward, or trustee, of his own accord, and that even in opposition to the wish of a trustee or leaders' meeting—and that it was determined, that a superintendent **SHOULD HAVE SUCH A POWER, to exercise on extraordinary occasions, HE BEING JUDGE AS TO WHAT CASES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED EXTRAORDINARY.** He observed, this did not arise out of any *written* law but out of an agreement amongst themselves. This makes the case all the worse; as the preachers can act on any law they please to make, and that without the people being aware that such law exists. At a subsequent trustee meeting, Mr. Galland was asked if this was true? He not only acknowledged its truth, but said, that a case occurred in the Lincoln circuit, when he was superintendent there, where a charge was brought against a member, and several official persons were opposed to his being dismissed, but that if **ALL THE QUARTERLY MEETING** had been against it, he should have thought himself justified in putting him out of the society!"

The Leeds case, however, in 1827, which formed an epoch in the history of Wesleyan Methodism, supplied the occasion of sounding out more loudly the inherent rights and exclusive responsibilities of the circuit preachers, and of more distinctly asserting the prerogatives of Conference and its representatives. And since that period, the frequent removal from office, or membership, by the authority of superintendents alone, demonstrates that the judgment of the respective meetings is in such cases looked upon, not as a *chartered inalienable right*, but rather as a privilege, the exercise of which is allowed or superseded, according to the kindness or lordliness of the preacher, and the real or supposed disposition of the people. To cite all the cases of flagrant injustice, which have taken place under the operation of this system, is impossible; as the victims have not unfrequently been men whose timidity, or poverty, or

obscure situation prevented their voices from being raised, or if raised, from being heard beyond the limits of their own societies or circuits. Their cry has gone up to heaven, where it has been regarded; while on earth they have found but little sympathy, and no redress. Happily, however, through the medium of the *Wesleyan Circular*, and the *Christian Advocate*, many such deeds, which must otherwise have remained in darkness, have been brought to light; and the eyes of thousands of your own people and of the public at large have been opened to the practical effects of your despotism. Some of those deeds, out of many almost equally revolting, I have already given. As an additional illustration of the unparalleled oppression, which, in conformity with law, is practised among you, and of the pontifical lordliness of spirit in which your laws are executed, I present you with the following statement of facts, every one of which, even the least, throws some light on—not only the “theoretical defects” of your government, but the enormous *practical* wrongs naturally produced by it:—

“TO THE EDITORS OF THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

“Sirs,—Mr. Scott and myself having been wrongfully expelled from the Wesleyan Methodist Society, and false assertions having been extensively promulgated by our opponents, I beg leave to publish the real facts, leaving the reader to draw his own inferences.

“Mr. Baker, the superintendent minister shortly after his arrival in this place, considering the classes of Messrs. Salter and Josephus Ferris too numerous, intimated his intention of dividing them. He had previously nominated Mr. Ellery, a young man who had been a member of the society about two years, as a leader, but for what class it was not known; he was, however, duly appointed at a leaders' meeting, and, in order to provide a class for him, Mr. Salter's was divided. But when informed of the intended division, the members expressed their disapprobation, and one and all repulsed the effort; while the leader, Mr. Salter, said, ‘If we stand together, who can divide us?’ He added, that he much respected the person appointed, but did not consider him equal to the task. Notwithstanding, Mr. Baker persisted in dividing them, and instructed Mr. Salter to do it; but he, not liking to act in so arbitrary a manner, wished Mr. Baker to undertake the task. Mr. Baker inquired whether they were reasonable men, and being assured they were, expressed his intention of complying with Mr. Salter's request; but he subsequently declined, stating that he had to preach in town that day, and was afraid his mind would be ruffled. He therefore ordered Mr. Salter to divide them by lot, and ten members were separated, to be met by Mr. Ellery. It was in vain for them to object; they MUST meet with him or be wholly destitute of a spiritual guide. However, they still protested against his appointment, objecting to his short standing in the church, and his consequent inexperience. There were two members of their own class whom they would gladly have accepted; one of whom had been a member forty-five years, and had been a leader in other circuits; the other, of twenty years' standing, had been a local preacher, and had supplied the place of his leader, in his absence. They intimated their desire to have either of these appointed as their leader, instead of Mr. Ellery; but Mr. Baker declared that *no member should have the choice of his leader*. An intimate friend of Mr. Baker's, a kindred spirit, one who has directed his movements throughout the transaction, declared he considered it better for a hundred members to leave the society, than to choose their own leaders. Mr. Baker has repeatedly said, he did not value a hundred members, for he was confident whatever deficiency there might be occasioned in money matters by their loss, would be readily made up by the respectable part of the members. On another occasion he remarked that it had been a democracy, but he was determined it should remain so no longer; and, again, when some short-sighted leaders intimated that they were afraid of the consequences, he remarked, ‘I am not; it is for me to drive the oxen, and God will take care of the ark.’

“At a leaders' meeting, subsequent to the one at which Mr. Ellery was appointed, Mr. Baker nominated two other young men as leaders, the first of whom was unanimously elected; the other who had been recommended by Mr. Boot (late of this circuit,) (

was supported by many friends, and would undoubtedly have been chosen, had not his leader opposed him, stating that he was not an orthodox Methodist, and (to use his own words) was 'too peppery.' In consequence of this observation, Mr. Boot withdrew his nomination. I objected to this course of proceeding so contrary to rule. I stated that he was then in the hands of his brethren; that it was the superintendent's place to nominate, and ours to accept or refuse; but Mr. Baker sternly replied, 'I'll withdraw as many as I please, if I hear any thing of them with which I am not satisfied.'

"To a female who applied to Brother Scott to be admitted into his class, he stated that he could not admit her, as it would be acting in opposition to a resolution passed at a leader's meeting, and requested her to meet with one of the leaders appointed; upon which she burst into tears, and said she could not meet in any other class; when the members rose and said, he ought to receive her; he replied, 'If I do I shall be turned out of office'; to which they all answered, 'Then we will follow you,' and, remembering the words of Him who said, 'Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,' he allowed her to attend his meeting, but did not enter her name in his book as a member.

"A man asked me the week before, if I would allow him to meet in my class, as he should not make application to any of the other leaders. I sent him no answer; but, on going to the class, met him at the door. He asked me if I would allow him to enter, saying, 'through arbitrary measures I have long enough been deprived of the means, and wish to be instructed.' I felt for him, I saw the precipice on which he stood, took him by the hand, and we entered together; not with a design to receive him as a member of my class, but to save him, if possible, from returning like the 'dog to his vomit,' until the storm of spiritual opposition was blown over.

"In a few days I received the following note:—'Dear Brother, a report has reached us, that you have offered to take any of those members into your classes who lately met with G. Veal, and those who have been drafted from brother Ferris's and brother Salter's classes, and who have refused to meet in any of the four classes provided for them. You must allow me to tell you, that this must not be done; the decision of the leaders' meeting was *founded in the fear of God*, and from the best motives; and you will, on calmly considering the matter, see that it will be truly improper for any one leader to counteract the decision of the leaders' meeting.

"October 19th, 1833." Yours truly, J. BAKER."

"This was followed by Mr. Baker's introducing a resolution at the leaders' meeting to the following effect. —'We resolve, that, if any brother shall meet any of the members drafted from Messrs. Ferris's and Salter's classes, except the leaders appointed for them, they shall be no longer members of this meeting.'

"I then asked Mr. Baker if there were not rules for the government of the superintendent, and the leaders' meeting; to which he replied 'Certainly not: it is impossible for Conference to make rules to suit every case; but *it is for us to make rules according to circumstances and general usage*.' I told him I had been connected with the society for upwards of thirty years, and more than twenty years a member, but had never seen usage of this kind before; as I had always seen members allowed to meet with the leader of whom they approved. He replied, 'if you are aggrieved, you can appeal to a District meeting.'

"At the end of another fortnight, we met Mr. Baker, as usual; he said he had heard that certain brethren had met some of the members which the resolution of the last meeting prohibited; and he was determined to carry the resolution into effect. He then asked brother Scott if he had met any of the members. He answered he had met one. He next inquired of me if I had spoken to any of them; I replied, I had to one. He said, 'It remains with you to say whether you will be any longer members of this meeting or not; if you will not promise to refrain from speaking to those members, you will be no longer members of this meeting.' We told him, to us it was a matter of conscience, and we could not make any such promise. He was about to exclude us from office, when an old and respected leader said, 'he had not the power of doing so.' He read the rule in the class-book, relative to the removal of leaders from office, and found it could not be done, but in conjunction with a leaders' meeting, and designated it as a species of popery; and said, if Mr. Baker persisted, he should be under the necessity of calling a district meeting within three days. Mr. Baker replied, 'You may call a district meeting if you please, Sir; *I know the law—this case has been settled over and over again in the Leeds case*; and really, Sir, I have been

informed that this is not the first time you have preached your *sedition* doctrines at a leaders' meeting.' This worthy leader, not willing to quarrel, turned round and said, 'Do, my brethren, desist from speaking to those members.' We said again, it was a point of conscience, and we could not. Mr. Baker was again about to pass sentence of exclusion from office, when I told him that the resolution upon which he acted was *not that of a leaders' meeting*; for some of the leaders did not understand it to exclude the leaders, but the drafted members. Mr. Baker replied, It was of no consequence, he would carry it into effect. When another old and respected leader said, 'Sir, if you are determined to put these leaders out, I will not lift my hand against them.' Mr. Baker exclaimed, 'What! am I a child then? I did not expect opposition from this quarter especially.' And then, becoming more calm, said, 'It is my PREROGATIVE; yet, *out of courtesy*, I will take the voice of the meeting.* At the same time, he stated, that he would not meet the leaders any more on the point of discipline, while in the circuit; which threat he carried into execution before that day week, inasmuch as, *without a leaders' meeting, he expelled me from the society*, and denied me the use of

* See this prerogative thus exercised by the superintendent of the Oldham circuit in May last. "Charges were preferred against three persons who had taken part in the meeting held at Oldham, concerning the case of the Rev. J. R. Stephens: namely, —Messrs. W. Knott, Hat-manufacturer, and local preacher; G. Jacques, leader and local preacher, and Henry Taylor, leader. They were informed by a written notice, that they were required to attend a special leaders' meeting on the Monday following, '*for having promoted a meeting contrary to the established rules and usages of Methodism.*' Mr. Knott was first charged with having acknowledged that '*the requisition presented to the circuit stewards was his; he had bought it and paid for it.*' It had been intended to make Mr. Knott's brother John, who is one of the stewards, a witness against him, but he declined the task, and the accusation was proved by the Rev. Mr. Turner, the second travelling preacher, on the circuit, who happened to be in an adjoining apartment when the expression was made use of. For this offence Mr. Knott was adjudged to be expelled from the society. Mr. Jacques was next charged with '*having acknowledged at a previous leaders' meeting, that he had presented the requisition for signatures,*' which was proved by Mr. James Miller; and Mr. Taylor was charged with having '*presented it to the circuit stewards,*' which was proved by Mr. John Knott. The Rev. Mr. Wolsey then read over a rule passed about the year 1798, forbidding the calling of any meeting without the consent of the travelling preacher or preachers; and on that rule he pronounced that William Knott and George Jacques were no longer members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, and that the sentence on Henry Taylor was deferred. The leaders then inquired whether *they* had nothing to say or do in the business?—Mr. Wolsey said they had not; he should not, on any account, submit either the conviction or punishment to *their* vote. Some of them attempted to speak, but were repeatedly silenced by the Rev. gentleman. One asked whether he considered that law a righteous and scriptural one? and was answered by the same authority, that *he* would not allow the law to be questioned; it was a point with which *they* had nothing to do. Another leader observed that he had witnessed proceedings in courts of justice, and never knew either felons or murderers treated in the manner the defendants had been that day. Their case had not been submitted to a jury; and Mr. Wolsey appeared to be acting in the capacity both of judge and jury. Mr. Wolsey said, they (the leaders) were the jury, and he was the judge. The leaders then demanded their right to express their opinions, but he positively refused to put the question to a vote, either as to the proof of the offence or the mode of punishment.—One leader cried out '*popery, popery;*' another said, '*the Rev. gentleman has long been deemed a Cardinal, but his conduct is worse than that of the Pope.*' It was remarked by one leader, that though the law was explicit, there was no punishment annexed.—Mr. Wolsey, however, would not allow it to come before them as a question, and repeated the sentence in authoritative language, declaring that there was no appeal, and that he was responsible for consequences.—A local preacher and leader then said, if the brothers before the meeting were guilty, so was he.—Mr. Wolsey replied that *he* had nothing to do with that, he was not charged.—The leader then said he would no longer act with the preachers. When sentence on Mr. Taylor was deferred, he asked why he had been treated differently from his brothers?—Mr. Wolsey said it was an act of mercy.—Mr. Taylor said he *scorned* such mercy."

the pulpit. He then took the opinion of the meeting. Thirteen leaders were present; seven of whom, including the two young leaders last appointed, held up their hands against us. Mr. Baker then said, We were no longer members of that meeting, Brother Scott, *an aged man, was overwhelmed with grief*. I waited to see who would be appointed to our classes, when Mr. Baker said, "I cannot think of proceeding to business while I see any one here who is not a member of this meeting." * * *

This, Sir, is Wesleyan Methodism — *as it is*; not caricatured; not a single lineament distorted or disfigured; but in its own native form. Those who are sufficiently imbued with the spirit of despotism or slavery, may call it beautiful, and may admire it as the model of perfection; but *in this part of the structure I see the lineaments of the man of sin, and the deformity and spirit of the beast*; though, thanks to the God of providence! at present without their power.

Now, Sir, it matters little what minor privileges or even rights may be enjoyed by your people; for so long as they are exposed to oppressions and wrongs like those already enumerated, their most valuable rights are denied, and they are strangers to liberty. Of what importance is it that officers have a veto on the nominations of a superintendent, so long as no other person has authority to nominate, and the superintendent can, when he deems it expedient, harrass, or depose any whose honourable independence prevents them from being his passive vassals? Of what value are meetings for discussion, which have an absolute master placed over them, armed with authority either to forbid the introduction of any subject which he chooses to pronounce "unmethodistical," — or to refuse to put to the vote any motion which he knows will be offensive to his superiors — or to dissolve the meeting, when he can no longer repress its spirit — or to thrust out of the church the opposers of his will, as rebellious or contumacious? And of what value is the lauded right of petition and remonstrance when trammelled with such restrictions as you impose — or when, though exercised in the most temperate, and respectful manner, as in the case of Rochdale, it only brings down the frown of those addressed? Above all, what is there that can deserve the name of liberty, so long as your private members, who constitute the great body of the church, have no voice, either in the nomination or appointment of any officer, — no, not so much as that of their own class-leader; but, like so many intelligent machines, have only to learn and obey the will of their spiritual lords? Or what can you possess of liberty so long as *no class* of the community has any voice, either personally, or by representation, in that assembly which gives law to the whole body? Not only as Britons, Sir, but as *Christians* we maintain, that in reference to human legislation and government, without representation, the liberty we are entitled to claim cannot be enjoyed; and that the following principles are correct:

1. Men, as rational and moral beings, have a property and correspondent rights, both in their own persons, and in surrounding objects, of which they cannot justly be deprived, except as a punishment for crime, or to secure a greater public good.

2. The end of government is not the honour or emolument of the governors, but the order and happiness of the governed; or, in other words — the welfare of society at large.

3. As no one is either infallible in judgment, or absolutely perfect in moral principles and character — and as the possession of absolute power tends both to warp the judgment, and excite irregular passions, and thus leads to injustice; a government in

which the several classes of society are fairly represented, is the most likely so to legislate and rule, as to harmonize the jarring interests, provide for the diversified wants, and secure the order and happiness of the whole.

4. In order that such representation may be effective, it must not only exist in the inferior courts, but it must extend to the *supreme legislative assemblies*; securing there that expression to the general voice, and that influence to the general will, without which, neither are the true interests of the society likely to be understood, nor its liberties likely to be perpetuated.

These are the strong grounds on which, as Britons, we rest our claims for a representative government; and this is the extent to which we require that representation to be carried. Now these grounds exist as perfectly in religious, as in civil society: for

1. *In religious society* members have a direct personal interest in the ministry they support, the places of worship they build, the doctrines they hear, the ordinances they share, and the religious associations they form. These have been instituted either by them, or for their sake. The members, therefore, form that community to which the temporal goods, the religious ordinances, and both the offices and officers of the community belong, or for the benefit of which all were instituted. They, consequently, have as direct an interest in legislation and government—in the due administration of the laws of the community, and in the right appropriation of its property, as they possess in civil society.

2. In the Church, as well as in the world, the end of government is to secure the order and happiness of the whole body, by the enactment and impartial administration of those laws which its circumstances require, and the right appropriation of its property.

3. In the Church neither perfect wisdom nor absolute rectitude is found in any particular class of persons, whether pastors or members; therefore, notwithstanding the deference and esteem that may be due to ministers, as the general expounders of the law of Christ, yet they cannot be entitled either to implicit faith or universal obedience. Contrariwise, their liability to err in judgment and practice renders it necessary that others should be associated with them, to direct by their counsels and support by their influence, to prevent decisions by which some might be injured, and others disgusted; and to assist in the adoption of such measures as the wants and wishes of the community may demand. The community too, having such a property and interest in all its own institutions, possesses an unequivocal natural right to *require* such an association. The right, in fact, exists as perfectly in religious, as in civil society; and may, therefore, be freely claimed and exercised in the former, as well as in the latter of these situations. The representative system of government, which, as Britons, we hold so dear, and on which alone, as we have been made to feel, our civil liberties can securely rest, is equally adapted to religious society; and there also presents the surest guarantee against the errors of ignorance and prejudice, and the aggressions of covetousness, ambition, and revenge.

4. Representation in the Church, to be efficient, must be extended to the highest, as well as to the lowest legislative assemblies; nor does it seem easy to justify the association of other officers with the ministry, in leaders' and quarterly meetings, except on principles that will as clearly prove the necessity of such an association in district meetings and Conferences. If, indeed, the security of public liberty requires that such an association should exist, when the interests of only an individual member, or of a society, or of a circuit are concerned, much more is it required in those assemblies, the decisions of which deeply involve the liberty, the peace, and the welfare of the whole body.

These principles you practically deny, and flagrantly outrage. With you, an aristocracy of preachers determine who, from among themselves, shall compose the Conference; and then, as a Conference, proceed to legislate for each other and the body; being themselves at once the sources, the judges, and the administrators of the law; making themselves a general and ultimate court of appeal; and leaving to all classes of the community, as their only alternatives, implicit obedience—an abandonment of their places in the church—or excommunication, with all the odium and lacerations which Wesleyan Methodists so well know how to inflict. Your system, Sir, has by some been denominated TORYISM; but improperly: for the most ultra-toryism of the present

day, is the perfection of liberty compared with it, and would be deeply disgraced by assimilation to it. It is rather the absolutism of Spain under the atrocious Ferdinand, than the Toryism of Britain. This did allow the people a voice in the election of many officers, both civil and parochial ; and would have continued unto us not only the nominal representation of the rotten boroughs, but the real representation of the counties too. But Wesleyan Methodism, in the race for power, leaves the proudest Toryism far behind, and laughs to scorn its paltry aims and feeble efforts. Priding itself in hating democracy as it hates sin, it utterly condemns that palladium of liberty, representation ; disallows that freedom of inquiry and discussion, of petition and remonstrance, which the members of other religious communities enjoy ; tells its people, in effect, that they have nothing to do with legislation and government, except to obey and submit ; and raises a throne to be occupied exclusively by its circuit preachers, on which is written, in characters which those who run may read,---AN OLIGARCHICAL DESPOTISM.

I know, Sir, that the defence which oppression has always at hand, and which both political and religious partisans are ever ready to support and receive, will be set up in reference to the preceding, or any other similar accounts ; and that we shall be told, they are full of exaggerations and misstatements. But, knowing, as I do, the evasions and deliberate falsehoods to which recourse is had to shield the character and support the antichristian power of the ministry among you — knowing, as I do, what *you* have said and written, and that one of your own members who heard you in Norfolk-street chapel on the memorable morning of November 23rd, 1834, unblushingly maintained, in a public shop in this town, that you never mentioned Mr. Allin on that occasion, until another member of yours was found to confront and silence, though not to shame him,—any defence set up will be received by me with no ordinary caution.

Do not imagine, Sir, that I intend to represent all the Wesleyan ministers as equally erroneous in principle, or oppressive in practice : or that I wish to represent any of them as acting worse than other men would act, placed under the influence of the same system and circumstances. It is to such influence that I attribute your wrongs : and partly to illustrate the connexion that exists between your despotic form and principles of government, and correspondent practical injuries, have I adduced the preceding facts. A connexion this which eternal wisdom has established, and which will no more be separated by despotic preachers than by any other class of despots. The persons, Sir, who make themselves the depositaries of absolute power will gradually become its VICTIMS ; and the same influence which converted a West Indian slave-holder into a monster of inhumanity, will inevitably deteriorate the principles and character of Wesleyan preachers. Not only is it true that irresponsible power is safe only in the hands of perfect virtue, but the most perfect virtue found among men is as much endangered by its connexion with such power, as the welfare of others is hazarded by its exercise: nor is it certain that under such influence, even the original rectitude of paradise itself would be secure. To imagine that divine grace must preserve you untainted, when you voluntarily rush into tempta-

tion, or that it must keep you from being blinded by the ambition which you are gratifying, or from being corrupted by the power to which others are entitled, but which you unrighteously monopolize, is to indicate, not pious confidence, but that presumption, the absurd expectations of which the God of grace will disappoint. Of this, your present history is a proof so legible, that all other eyes except your own can easily discern it; and, if possible, to open yours, as well as for my own justification, I have placed before you some of the sickening details contained in this and the preceding letter. Could I consider the facts thus detailed, as having no natural connexion with great principles, but as originating in individual passion or caprice, or in circumstances purely incidental, much as I should then deplore them, yet I should deem them of comparatively trifling importance. Their connexion, however, with the absolute power claimed and exercised by you, is too plain to be mistaken; and they are obviously the natural results of bad principles of government. Here is the fundamental error, the crying evil of your system; and the *cause* of the discontents of which you so loudly complain. You may expect peace; but, in a country where freedom is understood, what peace can there be, what peace *ought* there to be, while your ambition is so rampant, and your acts of injustice are so flagrant and numerous? The convulsions which are shaking the foundations of your Connexion, you may attribute to Satan and his counsels; but the only Satan they require is your insatiable lust of power; and the only necessary counsels are formed in your exclusive Conferences—embodied in your debasing and enslaving laws,—and perfected in those cruel and oppressive practices, some of which have been set before you.

The only effectual remedy for the crying evils thus existing among you will be found in the lowering of your lofty pretensions, and the admission of your people to the voice and influence in legislative and judicial proceedings, which so perfectly harmonize with their intellectual and moral constitution—the will of the divine Founder of Christianity—and those principles of civil liberty, so highly, and so justly esteemed by them. You may make trifling concessions—or you may somewhat extend, and more satisfactorily guarantee the privileges of the local meetings. But this, which is almost too much to expect from you, will be only the slight healing of quackery, instead of the perfect cure of well-directed skill. Would the people of Great Britain be satisfied to annihilate that branch of the legislature in which they are represented, and to leave the work of legislation as the exclusive prerogative of the aristocracy, provided they might be allowed to assist in the execution of the laws so made? or would they thereby obtain a guarantee for the continuance of liberty? Would it satisfy us, Sir, to have laws made without our consent, affecting our persons, our property, and all the conveniences and rights of social life, provided we might have the exquisite pleasure of obliging the unwilling to obey those laws, however iniquitous they might be? I imagine not. Yet this is the present liberty not only of your private members, but of every class of officers among you; and, without their representation in Conference, it is all the liberty they can enjoy. You may guarantee the integrity of the local meetings; but so long as Conference is supreme, were it to decree that

no person shall share the privileges of membership without the regular payment of a stipulated sum, and that no one shall sustain the office of leader without producing a given sum per member for his class; no local meeting would have any other liberty than to enforce the law, foolish, or even wicked as it might be. The same principle is applicable to the whole of your economy. And *the abstract possibility* of such a circumstance demonstrates, what, indeed, all history proves, that *without a voice in the supreme legislative assemblies, the liberty of a people CANNOT be secure.*

I am aware, Sir, that when attempting to vindicate your usurped authority, you deny that the principles of civil government properly apply to religious communities; and profess to find the warrant of your power in the New Testament. Though, therefore, I have stated the ground on which we contend for the application of the great principles of civil liberty to religious associations—and though I stand prepared to maintain that ground against any assailant, yet I intend, God willing, to try your pretensions by the test you have selected; and hesitate not to pledge myself to shew that the power you exercise is as repugnant to the law of Christianity, as it is to the recognized principles of civil government. A state of health, indeed, incompatible with close application, together with other necessary duties, may prevent the speedy accomplishment of these intentions: at the same time, I trust you will not have much cause to complain on account of delay.

The present letter, which has already been drawn out to a much greater length than I either intended or wished, I ought not to close without a few remarks on the slanderous attacks made on me by you and your coadjutors. The latter, indeed, deserve little notice. "The testimony of an Eye and Ear Witness" is a perfect abortion: and like one, after presenting before the public eye its swelling words of vanity for a few days, it suddenly disappeared, and passed into that oblivion for which its utter worthlessness had so fully prepared it. Were it not that it might gratify the vanity of the empty mind that produced the bubble, I would transcribe a passage for the amusement of some into whose hands this may fall; but let it rest in peace! The anonymous libels of "a Member of the Old Connexion," present another character. Not only does the author display "the meanness that creeps, and the venom that hisses," but, sheltered as he imagines himself to be, under impenetrable darkness, he throws out his venom with a profuseness, which, were malignity a property of the material organization, must instantly dissipate his stock, and leave him, from mere exhaustion, harmless as the new-born babe. But, fearing no lack of supplies, he pours out the blackening and disfiguring poison on all who happen to cross his path, without respect of persons. Dr. Warren, over whose character the breath of slander had not passed, until his eyes were opened to discern Wesleyan abuses, according to this libeller, "whilst supported for the regular work of an itinerant minister, felt no demur of conscience in employing that time which ought to have been devoted to pastoral duties, to the attainment of collegiate honours; and might have been seen parading the streets of Glasgow with the university badge upon his person. A gentleman in Sheffield, also, whose piety, benevolence,

and zeal deserve the highest praise — who, till he left the Wesleyans, was lauded to the skies, and at times was flattered in public meetings by the reverends of your body, to absolute loathing — and at whose feet, would he but return, his malignant slanderer, with the meanness that characterises reptiles of his class, would be one of the first to crouch and crawl, left your community from “disappointed ambition” — while now, “his vanity, egotism, and tyranny, can scarcely be borne:” and the opposers of your usurpation are classically denominated, “Political Radicals, Kilhamitish declaimers,” &c.

That I should have become the object of the rancorous vituperation of such a writer as this, is to me matter neither of surprise nor regret. His consummate ignorance, indeed, almost paralyzes hostility, and checks the indignant feelings which his bigotry and rancour might otherwise inspire. On him truth imposes no obligation, and falsehood no restraints: nor is it easy to conceive that the blush of shame can by any possibility be raised on a cheek, so entirely and deeply encased in ignorance and hardihood, and to which the crimson dye is impelled by a heart so insensible to correct moral principles.

Take the following, Sir, as specimens of his TRUTH. I am “late President of the Methodist New Connexion — now President of the New Connexion College, — and the great luminary of Kilhamitism;” — “the Address to the Delegates originated in Dr. Warren’s case, and was intended for him and his friends” — and I “know full well that the balance of power” in the New Connexion, “is in the hands of the priesthood!!!” Take, likewise, a few proofs of his justice as a critic, and of his charity as a christian: — The address to the delegates, is a “silly but vile production” — “a rodomontade” — distinguished equally by “its baseness, deceptiveness, and folly” — containing “raving expressions — rhetorical flourishes — and extravagant hyperbole;” — while I am among those “who for mere party purposes will make any sacrifice of truth and justice” — am influenced by “a settled and rooted malignity — whine about injustice, intolerance, and despotism” — have “lent myself to the foul work of calumny and misrepresentation” — and have perhaps been induced for “the obtainment of a morsel of bread, to become the amanuensis of some lordly layman, who has made” me “the instrument of dispersing his own venom.” These, Sir, are doubtless choice specimens of classic taste and fine feeling! Respecting the writer of the productions from which they are selected I shall not at present say all I think; only if that writer be a reverend colleague of yours, of Nottingham celebrity, as is represented by private report, let him take heed. The principles that characterise those productions can throw suspicion only over the past, as well as prepare dangers for the future.

Concerning your “Reply,” I have already stated that its more appropriate title would be — Misrepresentation exemplified. — Your partisans, however, boast that this is not proved; and, therefore, they reiterate your assertions as truth: how little reason they have for this, will soon appear. May I ask, what misrepresentations you have *exposed*? The charges were — 1. That you had published a pirated edition of my address, with introductory remarks designed to misrepresent both the author and his work. On this subject you preserve a very convenient

silence. — 2. That you had prefixed to that address, as a fact, what you could scarcely but know was a falsehood. — 3. That you had made an unprecedented avowal of bigotry. — 4. That you imputed as the writer's only motive, what is proved by the address itself to have been only a subordinate one. These charges you do not attempt to disprove by shewing the correctness of your original statements; you are therefore found guilty. — 5. That you laboured to practice deception on the public, by denominating the evidence about to be published, "*hearsay reports* of certain statements," &c. The proofs of this charge, which were succinctly given, you, with your usual disingenuousness, refuse to notice, except for a purpose which deeply implicates your integrity, and which I shall just now expose. As *proofs of your intention to mislead*, you durst not grapple with them: and that intention is therefore proved against you. If, then, as you say, such intention combines "the guilt of a liar with the cowardice of a poltroon," the laurels you are reaping are not those of renown. — 6. That you besought God to "parch the tongues and paralyze the arms" of the opposers of Methodism. This, you, as I before stated, deny. My witnesses, however, firmly adhere to their former testimony; and instead of rejecting that testimony, because in so early a part of the service you were likely to be "warmed only by the fire of devotion;" when I recollect your character, and the subjects you had determined to introduce, I perceive the probability that you would take into the pulpit as much of the fierceness of bigotry as of the flame of devotion. You also deny having wished a curse to any man. But why do you not tell us what you did wish, and *why* you wished it; and prove to us, that in your horrifying language there was nothing but the longsuffering spirit of Christ, and devotion's softening flame? That you employed that language for *some* purpose, even your hardihood will not enable you to deny, though you possess not the virtue to acknowledge it. Tell us, Sir, honestly and plainly, what that purpose was; and then we shall see, but not till then, how far you have been misrepresented here.

Such is the whole extent to which you have succeeded in *exposing* misrepresentation: — that you have succeeded far better in *exemplifying* it is easily seen. Did my limits allow, I could shew this to be the case with the following allegations among others. — That I have torn your language from its connexion: — that I pronounced judgment before I had obtained proof of guilt: — that I and others have incorrectly characterised your address: — that the account (forced from me by your dishonesty) respecting the care taken in the collecting of evidence, was published for the purpose of "getting my character up, and yours down:" — and that the address published as part of your reply, is, either in language or spirit, the address actually delivered by you in Norfolk-street Chapel.

Most sincerely do I wish that your delinquencies ended here. But they do not; and I now, in the face of your own community, and of the British public, charge the following upon you, as utter, and, I fear I must add, deliberate falsehoods: —

" But this is not the only presumption against Mr. Allin's *candour* which his conduct furnishes, notwithstanding all his flourish: for secondly — when he had received my

corrections, accompanied by an offer to meet him either in my own house or in any other place which he might choose, in order to satisfy him that the report of my prayer and sermon was false, he not only did not choose to accept the offer of an interview, but he has, in the face of my solemn denial, and the denial of others of my hearers who have conversed with *himself* on the subject, published the whole to the world as truth; and the only use which he has made of the corrections, about his efforts to obtain which he takes so much credit to himself, is to give a more *specious* colouring and *wider* circulation to the shameless slander."—*Reply*, pp. 5, 6.

You here affirm concerning the written document I sent to you—first, that notwithstanding the corrections furnished by you and others, I "published the WHOLE to the world as truth;" and, secondly, that "THE ONLY use" made of the corrections, was "to give a more *specious* colouring and *wider* circulation to the shameless slander." Now, Sir, happily, I still possess the document which was in your hands from Saturday evening till Monday forenoon; and the friend still lives, to whose care it was confided, and who received your corrections. I ask, then—were not the following things stated in that document? 1, That you had represented me as having written to ministers or members of yours, to induce them to join the New Connexion.—2, That you had denominated me "a Kilhamite," or "a Kilhamite preacher."—3, That in reference to the council alleged by you to have been "held in hell," you had represented me either as one of the counsellors, or as employed by them in furthering their designs.—4, That I had reason to suppose you were the author of the anonymous libel, signed "An Old Methodist."—And 5, That you had stated, the Rev. W. R. Hamilton of Leeds, was so disgusted at my conduct, that were he to see me in the street, he would pass to the other side. Were not these some of the things stated in my communication to you? But none of them had been presented by me before the public. Not, indeed, because I doubted the correctness of some of them; but partly because I had no wish to pursue you to the verge even of truth;—and partly because I wished to confine myself, as nearly as possible, to *unquestionable* things. So that the real state of the case is this—out of *seven* circumstances named in that document, *TWO* only had been adduced. In addition to this, in the letter sent to me, describing your proceedings, you denied the use of two degrading terms, there attributed to you; and, as I stated in my first letter, they were both omitted. Yet in the face of these facts, you can sit down and deliberately write the falsehoods, and send them forth under your hand and seal—that I had published the *whole* to the world as truth—and the *only* use made of the corrections, was to give a more *specious* colouring and *wider* circulation to the shameless slander! I can conceive it possible, Sir, that you might have forgotten *some* of the statements now enumerated, and the whole of which you had read; but that you should have forgotten *all* of them, I deem an impossibility; more especially, after some of them—as the cases of Mr. Hamilton, &c., had been subjects of much conversation with the friend who waited upon you, and after I had expressly declared that I had omitted the two expressions disavowed by you in the letter before named.* I therefore feel not only at liberty, but compelled, thus publicly to denounce your statements, as the most

* See the First Letter to Mr. M'Lean, p. 11.

direct and atrocious falsehoods I have ever been called upon to rebut, not excepting those of that arch-impostor, Carlile:—falsehoods obviously put forth to discredit statements which you found it impossible to refute, and to induce your deceived partisans to raise the song of triumph at the expense of truth. Sir, I solemnly put it to your conscience, (unless it be seared) whether such conduct is not more befitting the agent of “the father of lies,” than the professed servant of God; and whether it does not indicate a destitution of principle, incompatible either with the real enjoyment or the honourable ministration of religion? I speak thus plainly and publicly, because you have “sinned in the face of the sun;” and I call on your people, whose confidence you have abused, and upon your Conference, to which you profess yourself amenable, either to require you to furnish an explanation, or an apology for such reckless violations of truth, or at once to proclaim to the world, that, in their judgment, truth is not a christian virtue, and a respect for it has ceased, among you, to be a qualification for the christian ministry.

Do not soften your pillow, Sir, with the supposition, that these are the expressions of vindictive feeling. I indeed look on your proceedings with abhorrence;—and on you with mingled emotions of pity and shame: and until you confess and forsake your evil ways, such are the feelings I shall continue to indulge. But assured as I am that you can inflict no real injury on me, instead of vindictiveness, I only wish you and your system purged from the dross by which the value of both is so much lessened, and rendered as preeminently useful as, in some respects, both are fitted to become. Trusting that in spite of yourselves this will yet be the case,

I remain, Rev. Sir, yours sincerely,

Sheffield, Jan. 17, 1835.

THOS. ALLIN.

APPENDIX.

SINCE the publication of the first edition of these Letters, a pamphlet has appeared, by “Another Member of the Methodist Old Connexion,” which is in perfect keeping with its predecessors; and which, judging from the fact that it is composed of the same ingredients, mixed up in about the same proportions, may fairly be concluded to be the production of the same mind. A bare enumeration of all the slanderous misstatements it contains, would require little less room than the pamphlet itself; misstatements, many of them obviously wilful, and put forth for no assignable purpose except to degrade me in the estimation of such as are either too indolent or too confiding to examine for themselves; and thus to discredit facts and reasonings which cannot be disproved. The virulence of the poison is, however, its own antidote: and the only brand of infamy the monster requires, is broadly and deeply impressed upon its front by its progenitor himself. No one can justly suspect either the parent or his offspring of those insincere professions of piety and candour with which I am so liberally charged; for as there is no semblance of the things, so, happily for consistency, there are no professions of them: and the cardinal virtues in the moral code adopted, appear to be “hatred, envy, and all uncharitableness.” Most truly, therefore, am I informed, that I am “now in the gall of bitterness;” inasmuch as the

bitterest gall which "A Member," and "Another Member of the Methodist Old Connexion" could mix up, has been poured upon me as abundantly as their capabilities will allow; and no one, after the specimens furnished by them, will question their powers of production.

This last performance I should leave to sink under the load of its own obliquities, were it not for two allegations in which others are concerned, and its attempted defence of Mr. M'Lean. With his accustomed meekness, and charity, and regard for truth, the writer states, "you and your friend have been appointed as a sort of committee to treat with the disaffected of other societies, and to arrange with them until your next Conference: or, in other words, you have received *letters of marque, as two chartered pirates, to assail, rob, and destroy all churches, and to take prisoners men of all creeds and colours.*" "It is in some degree satisfactory to learn that your mission and work have not received the unanimous approbation of your body; that your conduct at Gateshead was opposed by some respectable men of your communion; and that some also of your own ministers are prepared to oppose the ratification of the treaty you then attempted to establish between yourselves and some of our own people, who, but for your interference, would ere this have returned to order and happiness." To demand proofs of these assertions from this reckless and degraded libeller, is, as he well knows, to require an impossibility, because proofs do not exist; as the appointment alledged on the one hand, and the opposition said to have been made on the other, are **PURE FABRICATIONS**. And lest it should be imagined that, after all, he is but half an imposter, being expert only in creating fictions and imposing them upon us as facts, he supplies some choice specimens of the effrontery with which he can *deny* the truth. As those who are labouring to purge Methodism from its impurities and to increase its capabilities of usefulness, by limiting the arbitrary power of the circuit preachers, are generally represented as the enemies of *Methodism*, and as labouring for its *destruction*; by which means excellencies are confounded with defects, and essential good with evils which have been unwarrantably superinduced, I had in my third letter thus adverted to the fact: "The antisciptural and irresponsible power, claimed and exercised by the circuit preachers among you, called by you *Methodism*, and the removal of which you would represent as the destruction of every truly valuable, instead of being even essential to *Methodism*, is in fact an *incubus*, &c." On this he observes, "I am compelled to denounce it as a direct and atrocious falsehood. I solemnly put it to your own conscience, I put it to the inhabitants of Sheffield, I put it to the community at large, whether the preachers of the Wesleyan Connexion consider their *irresponsible power* as every thing valuable in *Methodism*." What the Wesleyan ministers "consider," they shall tell for themselves.

The members of the "Wesleyan Methodist Association," amounting now, as is said, to fifty thousand, ask for no change either in the doctrines, or itinerant ministry, or religious ordinances, or general economy of Methodism. They only require securities against such an unrighteous exercise of power as is partially unfolded in the preceding pages, by increasing the authority of the local meetings, and by giving the laity some additional influence in district meetings and Conference: they have not, however, yet demanded the influence actually possessed by every Presbyterian and Independent church, and by the New Connexion and Primitive Methodists. Their alleged factiousness, and malignity, and hypocrisy, and wickedness—not excepting their opposition to the Theological Institution, are directed *exclusively* to this object. The *whole* of Methodism, except the despotic power of the circuit preachers, they desire to preserve inviolate; and even that power they wish to limit only so far as both right and expediency require. Now in reference to that power which is thus the only object of attack, what do the preachers "consider?" Why, eighty-seven of the most influential of them, in a document circulated both separately and in the Magazine, have stated, "It is unnecessary to inquire into the origin of these destructive designs; which, if accomplished, would leave to the Methodism established by our venerable founder, nothing but the name; and which are not alarming, only because they aim at so entire a subversion of the whole system, that we feel it next to impossible for our brethren to be generally seduced by the most specious appearance or plausible pretext that can be put upon them." Here it is affirmed of those who merely oppose the despotic power of the preachers, that they aim at the entire "SUBVERSION OF THE WHOLE SYSTEM;" and would leave to Methodism "NOTHING BUT THE NAME!" Similar testimonies, too, might be multiplied in abundance. Yet the preachers do not identify their offensive power with Methodism; or represent its removal as "the destruction of every thing truly valuable;" and the assertion that

they do so, is "a direct and atrocious falsehood." — If to deny the truth be falsehood, and if to deny what is *known* to be the truth, be "wilful and atrocious falsehood," then may the charge brought against me, be justly retorted upon a libeller, the concealment of whose name is the only indication that shame has any place in his breast.

The defence of Mr. M'Lean which he has attempted, presents the same odious character. The maledictory language employed by that gentleman, he calls "a scriptural expression," and affirms, that "it was used in the scriptural and proper sense," and "has been often uttered under similar circumstances by men whose piety and prudence have never been questioned." To the inquiry, why he has furnished no proof of these affirmations? only one answer can be given: — He knew them to be incapable of proof. But as Mr. M'Lean *must* be defended, and as no one having any character to lose appeared disposed to risk it in so hazardous an adventure, this writer having first screened himself, by an anonymous appellation from "the exposure" and shame which he felt such a defence must merit, would hazard a few hardy assertions which, though false, might be received by some as equivalent to truth; and, having set himself to deceive, a few additional deceptions were of little moment.

His most important work, however, was yet to be performed, in repelling the charge at the close of the preceding letter: a charge, which, had it been repelled by a clear and satisfactory explanation, would have been cheerfully withdrawn. But that such an explanation has been furnished by the author of "The Exposure" I cannot allow. He seems, indeed, to have felt the difficulty of his task; and therefore labours, by putting on his boldest front, and by combining his utmost hardihood of assertion with his greatest virulence of abuse, to conceal obliquity which he could neither defend nor disprove. Amidst the ebullitions of rancorous feeling and the language of scorn in which he here indulges, the only explanatory circumstances stated by him are these: "The only article in the whole 'document' worthy the name of a charge, was the one which represented Mr. M. as employing the language of cursing. This was the only point at issue between you and him. Here his testimony and evidence were to be opposed to yours, and on this subject he presented your friend who waited upon him, with such corrections of the charge as entirely removed its offensive character, and to these corrections he pledged his veracity as a Christian minister. Notwithstanding this, you published the whole of the charge, as if no such corrections had been presented."

That I considered the maledictory language of Mr. M. to be the only subject not satisfactorily explained, was distinctly denied at the close of the first letter; and is still denied. The assertion that "the only article in the whole document worthy the name of a charge, was the one which represented Mr. M. as employing the language of cursing," arises, naturally enough, out of those principles and habits which so strongly characterise this writer, and of which his publication presents so ample an "Exposure." That "document" contained "charges" which, if true, fixed upon Mr. M. the guilt of dealing out insult and wilful falsehoods in the face of a large congregation, instead of preaching the gospel of Christ. That these are "not worthy the name of charges," may be affirmed by a libeller who cannot admit the criminality of falsehood without sealing his own utter condemnation: but every man who knows how to appreciate the claims of truth, will place this among the author's delinquencies, and receive it as an additional evidence of his consciousness that the cause he had undertaken was indefensible by honourable means. The same may be said of his statement that Mr. M. had furnished such an explanation of his horrifying language "as entirely removed its offensive character." That he had used the language, Mr. M. admitted; but said it referred to the enemies of Christ, or of the church generally. Now this may not be offensive to one who is as regardless of what others would call decency, as he is of truth; but every man who knows what is due to the character of Christianity, and to the feelings of a christian congregation, will pronounce such language to be, even according to Mr. M.'s own shewing of it, a libel on Christianity, and an insult to a christian assembly.

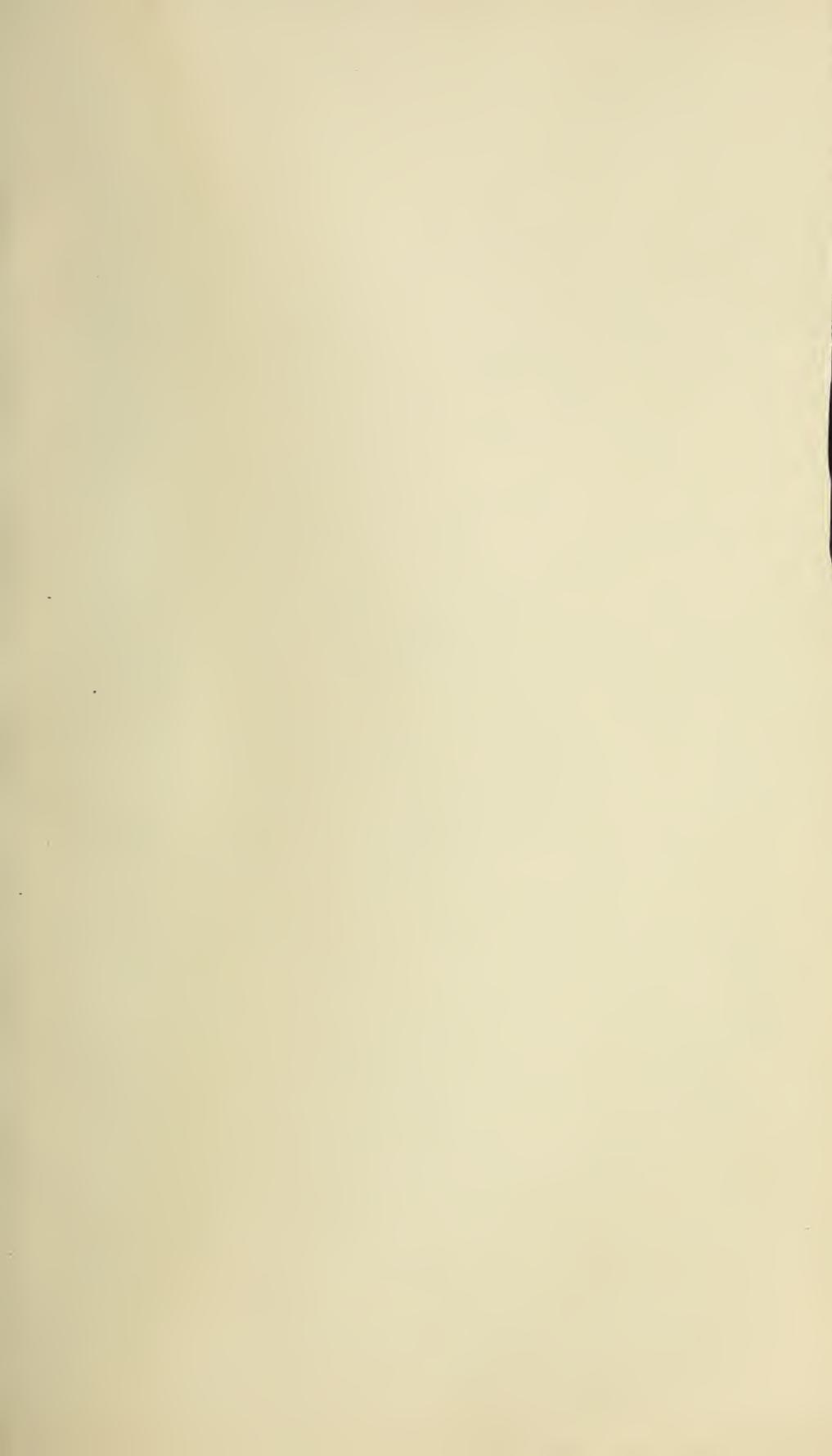
But Mr. M'Lean's statement concerning what he had corrected and I had published, referred, we are told, not to the entire "document" sent to him, but only to the charge that he had employed "the language of cursing": — "that this was his meaning too, I cannot but know": — "it is borne out by every rule of fair and legitimate criticism": — and "nothing but downright prejudice and blind malignity can misunderstand" it. Statements like these, in reference to such a case, would excite astonishment, were they made by any other writer; but in this suicidal "Exposure" the only astonishing circumstance is to find a single fact honestly stated, or a solitary principle fairly ap-

plied. "The facts of the case," to use the language of this writer, "are few and easily told." Mr. M'Lean, in order previously to discredit evidence about to be adduced against him, denominated it, "hearsay reports of certain statements." To counteract an insinuation so dishonourable to him, a brief statement was given of the whole course pursued with respect to the reports actually collected. And among other circumstances it was stated, that they were sent to Mr. M. for his *written* corrections.* This explanation, rendered necessary by the most palpable disingenuousness, Mr. M., with his wonted charity, represented as a crafty and hypocritical attempt to exalt myself and to degrade him: and to prove that in the conduct pursued there was no wish to ascertain the truth, he affirmed "the only use which he has made of the corrections, about his efforts to obtain which he takes so much credit to himself, is to give a more *specious* colouring and *wider* circulation to the shameless slander;" notwithstanding, at the same time, he knew that out of seven allegations sent to him, one was but incidentally named, and only a second animadverted upon. This, too, was not published, as Mr. M.'s defender falsely alleges, "as if no such corrections had been presented," for the correction furnished was fully given, and reasons were assigned for its non-acceptance. Such are *all* "the facts of the case." But these facts, so few, so plain, and so "easily told," place Mr. M. in a position the most unenviable; and demand either an explanation or apology from *him*. He, however, offers nothing: and as no one whose character is worth the keeping appears disposed to risk it by avowing himself the champion of such a cause, the services of a masked assassin are accepted, who most magnificently labours to shield Mr. M. by the most flagrant violations of truth, and to fasten on his accuser the imputation of malignity.

In addition to the preceding epitome of facts, I may observe that the statement of Mr. M. refers not to one particular charge as contradistinguished from others; but to use his own language, to "the report of the *prayer and sermon*," or to what he had previously designated "hearsay reports" &c.; and which contained not one only, but *all* the charges specified. It was that report of "the *prayer and sermon*" which received his "corrections;" but his blundering or crafty defender would limit the statement to one particular expression used in *the prayer alone*. Again: concerning the reports I had collected of "the *prayer and sermon*," I had stated that they had been sent to Mr. M.: and in reference to this part of my conduct what does he say? Does he inform his readers that some allegations in the document sent were not publicly preferred, though one was harshly and uncharitably pressed? No: that would have partially blunted the shaft with which he hoped to pierce his victim. All he says therefore, and which has been cited, (see p. 59,) is in substance thus given by himself: "The only use which he has made of the corrections, about his efforts to obtain which he takes so much credit to himself, is to give a more *specious* colouring and *wider* circulation to the shameless slander." Now I claimed credit for having sent to Mr. M., not a solitary allegation, but the *reports collected*. Mr. M. furnished, not a single correction of an isolated charge, but "corrections" of the whole document. And when he had named *that document* as "the report of his *prayer and sermon*," and "the corrections" I had sought,—in order that he might prove the apparent candour to be hypocritical affectation, he affirmed, without any qualification, that I had "published the **WHOLE** to the world as truth, and the **ONLY** use made of the corrections" &c. Language this which in itself admits only of one construction—that the whole "report of the *prayer and sermon*" was published as truth. Such, as I doubt not Mr. M. well knows, was the meaning annexed to the language by his own friends: and such must be the meaning annexed by all who have no other sources of information than those furnished by his "Reply." Yet this reckless falsifier of principles and facts can affirm that "nothing but downright prejudice and blind malignity" can so understand it! The man who *thus* labours to shield another, may well deem concealment necessary to preserve himself from the contempt which such conduct merits. But while that concealment is preserved, which is not likely to be long, let him remember who has said — "Be not deceived:—liars—shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

* That I considered at the time to be a much less questionable mode than oral intercourse and subsequent events have confirmed the conviction.

Shortly will be published, in *Letters to the Rev. J. Maclean*, "The Government of Wesleyan Methodism unscriptural."



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